

The Greatness of Sringeri



A Publication of Sarada Peetham, Sringeri.



श्री शंकर भगवत्पाद

A portrait of Adi Sankara

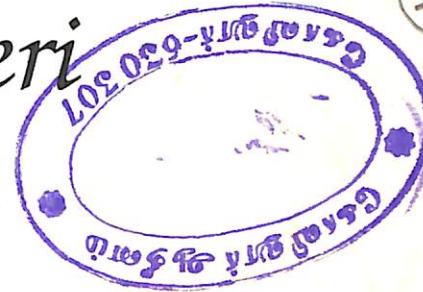


SRI SARADA PEETHAM

*The Greatness
of
Sringeri*



2940



Publisher : *Jagadguru Mahasamsthanam Dakshinamnaya
Sri Sarada Peetham, Sringeri.*

Order Copies from : *Administrator
Sri Sringeri Math & Its Properties
Sringeri - 577 139.*

Price : *Rs.50/- U.S. \$ 10.*

Front Cover : *An Overview of Sri Sarada and Vidya Shankar Temple.*

REVISED EDITION 3,000 copies, Published in May 1998

Printed at ABHINAV OFFSET PRINTERS, 76 Lattice Bridge Road, Thiruvannmiyur, Chennai - 600 041. Phone : 492 8932

CONTENTS

<i>Publisher's Note</i>	4
<i>Introduction</i>	6

CHAPTER

1	Sringeri	9
2	The Temples	14
3	The Matha	19
4	Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada (1)	37
5	The Disciples of Sri Sankaracharya	43
6	Sri Suresvara Acharya (2)	47
7	The Early Acharya (3-11)	52
8	Sri Vidyananya (12)	57
9	The Intermediate Acharyas (13-23)	61
10	The Later Acharyas (24-31)	64
11	The Recent Acharyas (32-35)	69
	Sri Narasimha Bharati VIII (32)	
12	Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati (33)	75
13	Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati (34)	81
14	Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha (35)	97
15	Tribute to Guru by H.H. Sri Bharati Tirtha	106
16	The Present Acharya : H.H. Sri Bharati Tirtha (36)	109

APPENDIX

I	Sri Jagadguru Parampara - Sringeri	121
II	Literary Works by Jagadgurus of Sringeri	122
III	Sri Abhinava Vidyathirtha Aksharamala Stotram	123
IV	Sri Chandramouleeswara Varnamala Sthuthi	124
V	Sri Sharada Pancharathna Sthuthi	125

Publisher's Note

Very few historical persons have exercised as deep an influence on Indian thought and spiritual life as Jagadguru Sri Adi Sankaracharya (A.D. 788 to 820).

In a short span of 32 years, he left an indelible impact of his impassioned intellect and universality on Indian philosophy, poetry, science ethics and humanism.

Sri Sankaracharya established a living tradition at Sringeri, Karnataka, by setting up the Dakshinamnaya Sri Sringeri Sarada Pitha with Sri Suresvaracharya as his immediate successor. By the strength of his resolve, the Sringeri Pitha to this day shines as a beaconlight to seekers of spiritual knowledge.

The Pitha has produced over the centuries a galaxy of Acharyas in an unbroken *guru-sishya parampara*. They have kept vibrant the unique heritage of India's ancient wisdom and learning. The place still retains the air of a tapovan, where a visitor could seek and attain peace.

This book, *The Greatness of Sringeri*, deals with the life and achievements of 36 sages-their spiritual attainments, personal sacrifices, services to mankind, and above all, a total dedication to the dissemination of Sankara's ideals and philosophy.

Each life is a saga of inspiration to the spiritual seeker-whether it is in the form of an ideal to follow, or an example to emulate, or simply a Guru easy to approach and honour.

Each Acharya during his lifetime has fulfilled an important role in spiritual advancement of thousands of devotees, who have implicitly followed his guidance, or carried out duties at his behest.

This book is a compendium of various sources on the subject. The title itself, with the major portion of the contents, has been taken from the publication, entitled *Greatness of Sringeri* (now out of print), authored by Sri Gnanananda Bharati (R. Krishnaswamy Iyer in his *poorvasrama*).

Other portions have been derived from various publications of Sringeri issued from time to time.

This is a revised edition of "**Greatness of Sringeri**" earlier published by Tattvaloka. Effort has been made to include latest photographs and update other relevant informations.

We have opened a new section in this book on the recent Acharyas of living memory, with a chapter devoted to each of the four gurus preceding the present Acharya.

There is a two-part chapter on the reigning Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaseamigal, with aspects of his inspiring life and a coverage of his spectacular coronation. His Holiness shines in his own right with great erudition and realisation, upholding the splendour and tradition of the historic matha that Sankara Bhagavatpada established.

Readers will find this book worth possessing for the wealth of personal and historical information with colour and black and white illustrations. We are certain that the positive influence of the lives of the great saints on the reader will be incalculable. May the pursuit of spiritual ideals become in this way more worthwhile and meaningful to the reader !



*H.H. Sri Bharati Tirtha with his Guru
H.H. Sri Abhinava Vidya Tirtha*

Introduction

When peace eludes you, when the world is too much for you, when the fever of life torments you, go to Sringeri.

That is not all. When all is well with you, when fortune smiles on you, go to Sringeri. You will realise that you always belonged to Sringeri. You will feel at home. The sacred vibrations of the place will awaken your dormant spiritual nature.

Sringeri, a holy, scenic, hilly place in Karnataka, is where peace is palpable, tangible!

Enchanted by the sacred spot, of matchless serenity, Adi Sankaracharya founded here the first and foremost of his mathas, the Sringeri matha, also known as the Sringeri Sarada Pitham.

Sringeri is where time has stood still; the Sringeri of legend, the Sringeri of mythology, the Sringeri of history, ancient and modern, the Sringeri where the successive Sankaracharyas have performed penance and attained samadhi, the Sringeri where there has always been a living Acharya, in the authentic tradition of Adi Sankara to bless and guide mankind.

Unbroken Tradition

Right from the Adi Sankara to the present Acharya, who is the 36th in the line of Parampara and who ascended the throne of transcendental wisdom on October 19 1989, the Sringeri

matha, also famed as the Dakshinamnaya Pitha, has had an unbroken succession of spiritual luminaries.

The difference between a trip to Sringeri and any other similar spot is that when you are back from Sringeri, you will come back renewed spiritually and physically.

Nature is bounteous in Sringeri. Its river Tunga is sacred and perennial. The air is rich with the aroma of medicinal herbs. The climate is salubrious even in the peak of summer. This much for physical vigour.

The spiritual renewal is a subjective one, better experienced by yourself. Enough to say there is everything to elevate you mentally and spiritually.

The social impact of the Sringeri matha is tremendous. It helps to spread Vedic and Sanskrit knowledge throughout the world, along with our great heritage and tradition. The present Acharya His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamigal is a shining example of love and compassion, as was the case in all the distinguished Acharyas who presided over the matha in the past.

The concern for the well-being of humanity continues to guide the endeavours of the Acharya and all the devotees associated with the matha.

CHAPTER 1

Sringeri

The Abode of Gods, the Abode of Acharyas, the Abode of Grace. . .



Nestled in a picturesque spot in the plateau of the Western Ghats, surrounded by charming hills rising on all sides like galleries of a huge amphitheatre, and reflected in the crystal water of Tunga river washing its steps, is the matha of Sringeri associated with the great Sankaracharya.

The surrounding mountain ranges are known as the Rishyasringa Parvata. This appellation is derived from the celebrated saint mentioned in the Ramayana.

A more charming spot can hardly be found in the whole of Mysore Plateau which abounds with natural scenes.

The stream Tunga issuing from a hill, winds her tortuous course somewhat north-east and speeds to meet her sister, Bhadra, coming from a different direction.

The two streams join about 16 Km off Bhadravati and form the sacred river, Tungabhadra

The highpeaks of the Western Ghats silhouetting against the sky, the dense forest full

of tropical vegetation, the warbling birds and the solitudes of sun-rise and sun-set conjure up an irresistible vision of a hermitage of ancient rishis.

No wonder such a hallowed spot was selected by Sri Sankaracharya for founding the first and premier matha. Tradition has it that after the great philosopher had dispersed all the non-Vaidic creeds through this land of Bharata Varsha, he was on the look-out for a convenient and holy place where he could found an institution to spread the truths of the Advaita Vedanta.

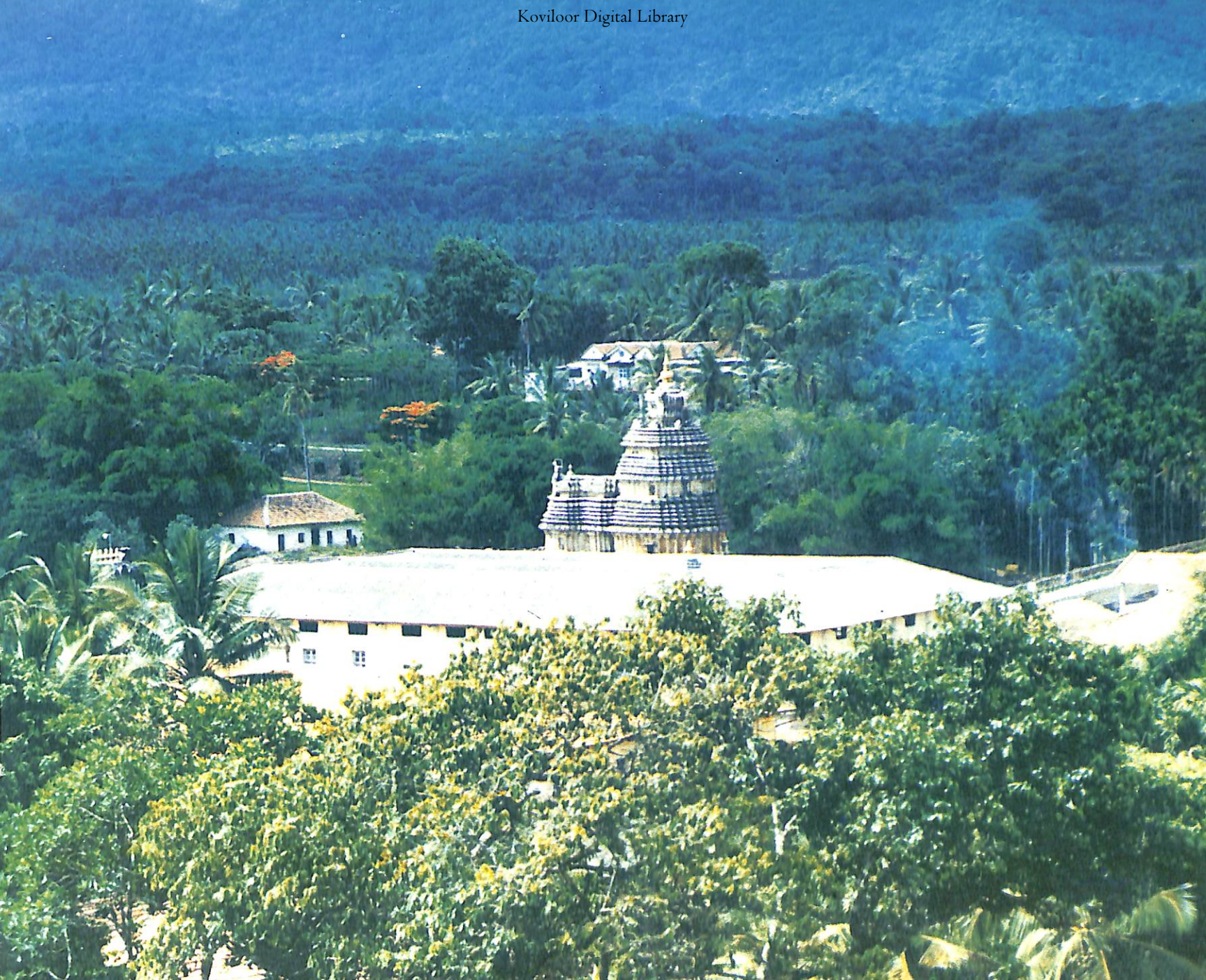
Choice of Location

He came to Sringeri where on the bank of the Tunga River he saw an unusual sight. A cobra spread out its hood over a frog in labour pains, to give shadow from the scorching sun. Struck with the sanctity of the place which could infuse love between natural enemies, he chose it to set up a matha. He spent there over 12 years of his all-too precious life of 32 years. This should give us an idea of the esteem the great Sankaracharya had for this holy spot.



Adi Sankara drew inspiration for setting up the first matha on watching this sight--a serpent giving shade to a pregnant frog.

A view of Vidyasankara Temple and Narasimhavana from the shrine of Malahanikaresvara. ►





The Malahanikaresvara linga



Sri Bhavani



Sthamba Ganapati



Sage Rishyasringa



Kigga Temple

Ancient Legend

Sringeri is hallowed for all times by the ancient legend of the sage Sri Rishyasringa. Sage Vibhandaka, by a curious combination of circumstances, became the father of a child, with a horn in the forehead, born of a deer. He found himself responsible for the proper upbringing of the child, whom he named as Rishyasringa. He thought that the easiest way to keep his son innocent of the worldly ways was to keep him in forest isolation. He succeeded to such an extent that when the boy matured into manhood, he had never set eyes on any human being other than his own father. He was even unaware of sexual distinction.

It so chanced that a neighbouring kingdom suffered from a severe drought. The king Romapada was advised by his ministers that there would be rains if sage Rishyasringa, blessed his kingdom with the touch of his holy feet. Romapada sent a number of fair damsels to the forest to bring the sage. They were however afraid of sage Vibhandaka, and so approached the hermitage when he was absent.

The innocent boy was struck with the contrasts when he saw them. Their flowing hair was unlike the matted locks familiar to him. The delicious sweets with which they fed him were different from the fruits available in the hermitage. Instinctively he was attracted towards

the women whom he regarded in his innocence as sages of a different type. Apprehensive of the sudden return of the father, they left Rishyasringa hastily with a parting invitation to come to their hermitage which was close by.

After that meeting, the mind of the boy began to dwell upon them and became restless. He was troubled by painful but exciting sensation. He finally decided to go to their hermitage. He felt they would be able to remove his mental oppression.

King Romapada, learning that the boy-sage had started from his hermitage, waited to receive him at the frontiers of his kingdom. The instant the holy sage stepped on the soil, the heavens opened up and poured down life-giving showers. The king, thankful for the favour conferred on him, showed his gratitude by offering the hand of his daughter Santha in marriage to the sage. Rishyasringa accepted her as wife and remained in the king's palace as an honoured guest for some time.

It was during this period that Dasaratha, King of Ayodhya, invited him to officiate in the sacrifice named Putrakameshti, by which he was blessed with four sons-- Sri Rama and others. Sage Rishyasringa felt that his married life was not without its merits. It gave him an opportunity to usher into this world Sri Rama, the personification of Dharma.

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

The Linga

Yet he felt himself called back to his native forest with its holy atmosphere. He retired to the forest to spend the remainder of his life in divine contemplation. When he shuffled off his mortal coil, a lightning issued forth from his body and disappeared into the Linga he was worshipping as a symbol of formless Absolute.

This Linga can be seen even now in the temple at Kigga, a village about 10 Km from Sringeri. Unlike others, this Linga is invested with a horn on its head, to commemorate the merger of the sage Rishyasringa. The Linga

that was worshipped by the sage Vibhandaka and into which he himself disappeared in the end is on the summit of a hillock. This is situated in the centre of Sringeri. The Linga is known as Malahanikaresvara and is worshipped even today.

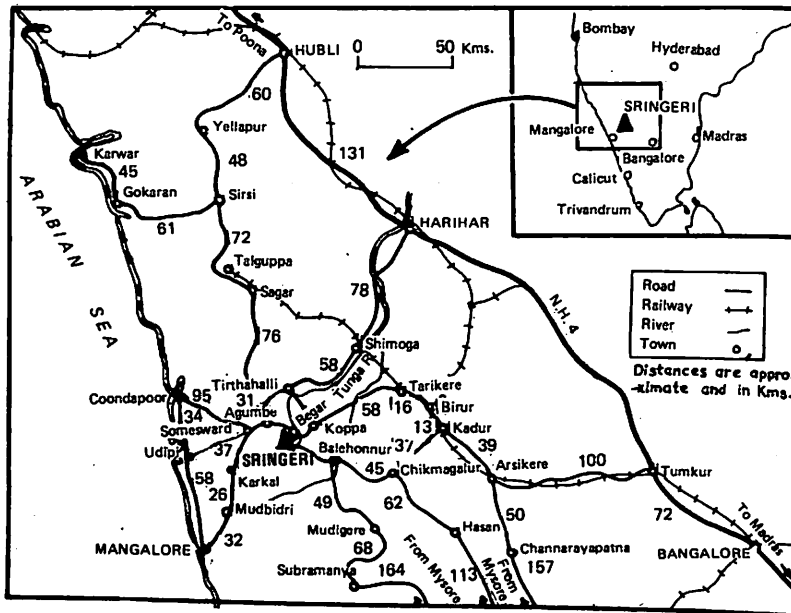
Still Holy

In spite of changing conditions and tendency of the modern society, Sringeri still possesses an exhilarating atmosphere of holiness. The old world charm still remains. It has lost none of its sanctity. On the other hand, it has gained an additional advantage of being the seat of eminent Acharyas who have graced the matha after Sri Sankaracharya.

Sringeri is about 96 Km from the nearest railway station, be it Birur or Shimoga. It is about 107 Km from Mangalore on the west coast.

There are buses frequently plying from these places to Sringeri. Buses also run between Sringeri and Bangalore about 320 Km away. Though arduous, the journey is enjoyable, through undulating hills and thick forest with magnificent scenery.

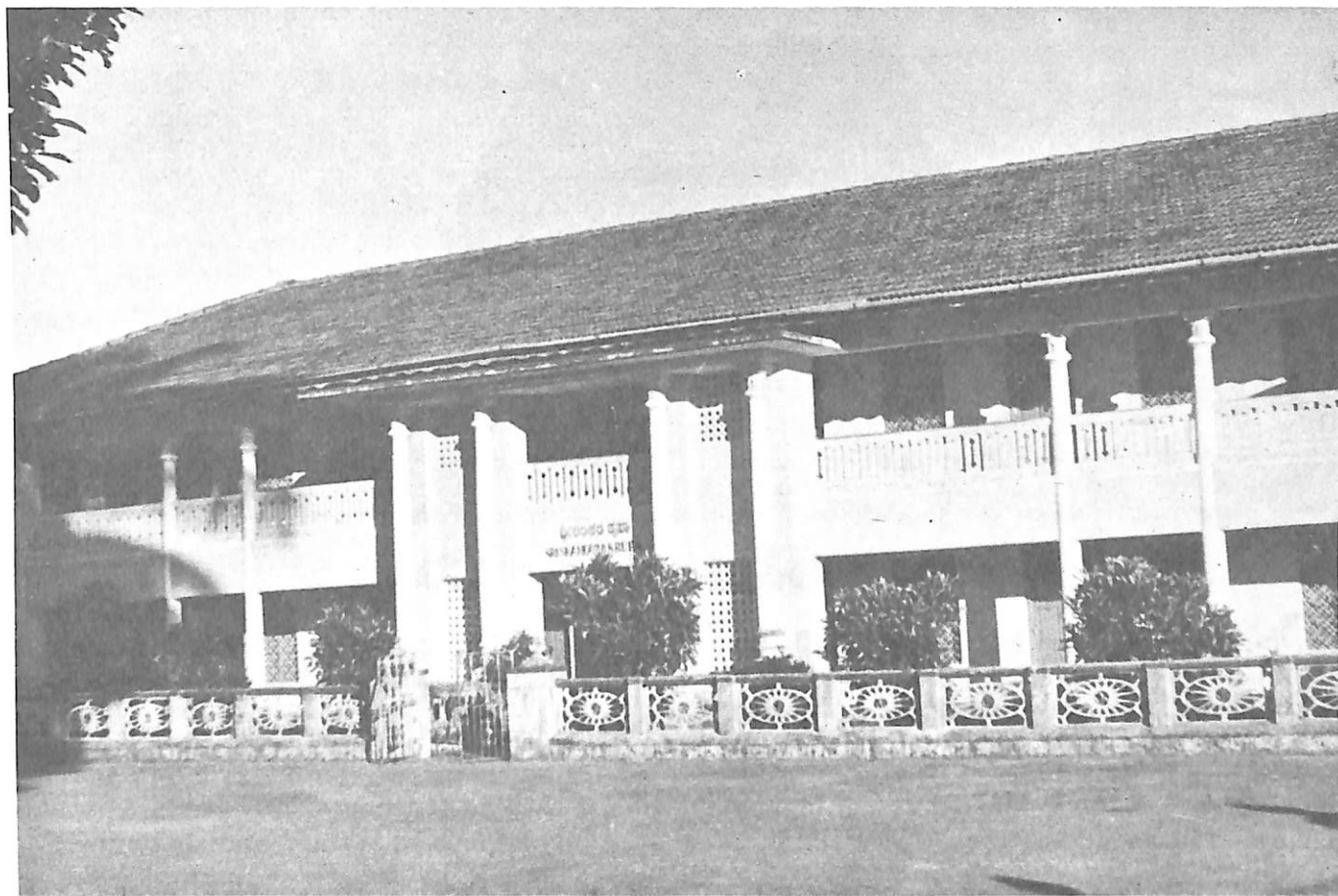
All vexations of the road are forgotten once you reach Sringeri. The enchanting scenic beauty, the



SRINGERI

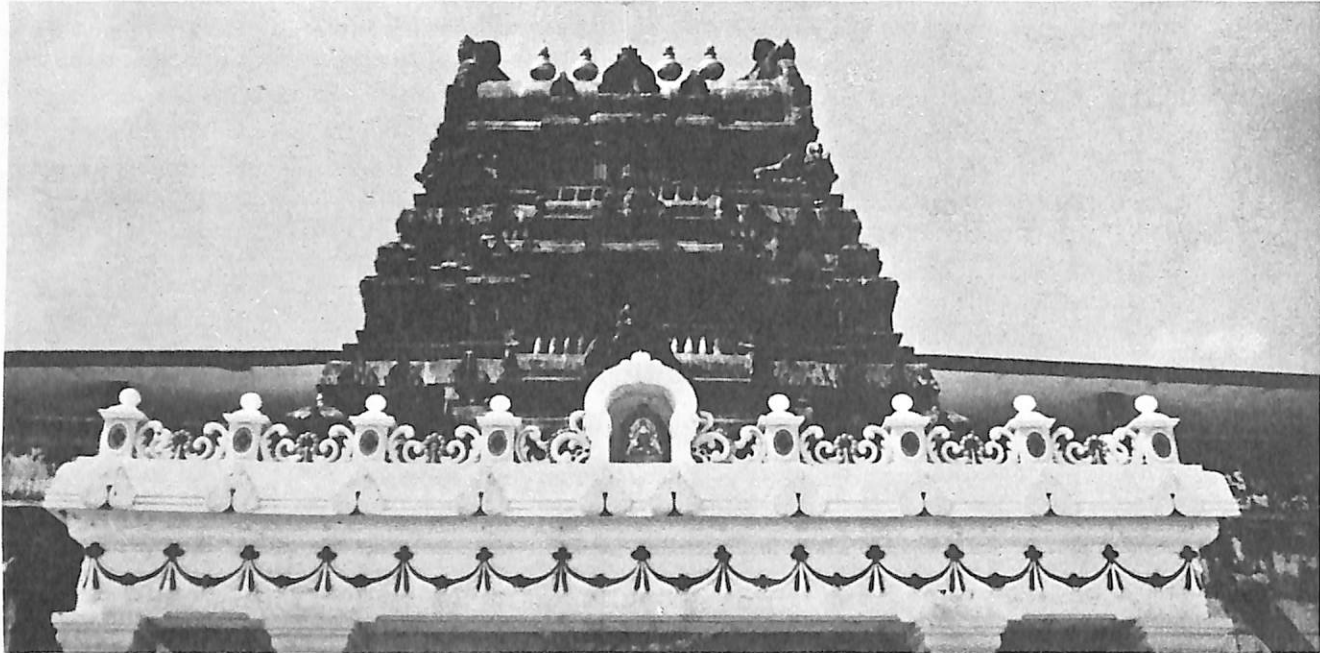
refreshing bath in the cool waters of Tunga, darsan of Goddess Sri Sarada, and the gracious blessings of the Acharya, leave you with sublime feelings.

The matha maintains a Dharmashala and several Guest Houses for visitors' convenience. There is a palatial building named Sri Sankara Kripa.



Sankara Krupa Guest House, Sringeri

CHAPTER 2

The Temples

The Temple of Sri Sarada originally consisted of a yantra carved on a rock in the middle of the Tunga River by Sri Sankaracharya with a sandal-wood image installed on it, and covered by a thatched roof. The present golden image dates from the time of Sri Vidyaranya, the Acharya who added the luxury of a tiled roof.

The tiled building existed till about 1907 when the 33rd Acharya decided to have a more substantial building erected in its place.

The work began but was unfinished at the time of his *siddhi*. His successor later had completed the construction. The *kumbhabhisheka* was duly performed in the year 1916 with gran-

THE TEMPLES

deur and enthusiasm. The event was graced by the presence of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore.

Structure of Sri Sarada Temple

The temple is built in what may be called the modern-day Nattukottai Chetti style of temple building. The *sanctum sanctorum* and the small hall in front of it are enclosed in a fine cabinet of polished granite and surrounded by fine broad covered walks for *pradakshina* (circumambulation).

In the front, there is a very spacious and beautiful hall supported by massive pillars of stone, adorned with exquisite carving. The ground plan is quite simple but appeals, nonetheless, to the imagination of the devotee. The goddess is visible from beyond the gateway. It has been provided with a stone *gopura* which attracts the attention of the passer-by even from a great distance.

Sri Sarada with her beaming countenance, sparkling eyes and bewitching smile sends a thrill of joy through the hearts of the devotees. She remains true to her promise to be ever immanent there. Her living presence infuses awe and reverence in the minds of all devotees and guides the destinies of the matha, which was entrusted to her care by Sri Sankaracharya to spread far and wide the truths of Advaita. The devout worship performed to her by the il-

lustrious Acharyas who have adorned the throne of the Sringeri matha since her consecration has sustained and augmented the splendour of her divine manifestation.

During all these centuries the goddess has filled the Sringeri matha with the aura and afflatus of her divine presence, to inspire and guide the actions of the Acharyas. Nothing great is undertaken by the Acharyas without seeking her guidance.

Within the temple of Sarada is kept the *Vyakhyana-dharmasimhasana* which represents the *sarvajnapitha* (transcendentalism). Into this throne is inducted every new Acharya at the time of his assumption of the headship of the matha.

Matrix of Universe

Sarada is *Guru rupini*--she is of the form of the Guru. Through the person of the Jagadguru, she dispenses her grace.

Sarada who represents the *saguna* form of the Supreme Absolute is the great Matrix of the Universe displaying in her hands the symbol of the jar full of nectar of immortality, a book signifying supreme knowledge, a rosary the beads of which signify the subtle *aksharas* or *bijas* from which the gross forms of the universe emanate, and the Chinmudra standing for the awareness of the identity of the Jiva with the Brahman. She is the light of all Upanishadic

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

knowledge and as such is Brahma vidya.

She is seated on the Sriyantra. The deity of Sriyantra is generally said to be Lalita Raja Rajeswari who is not different from Sarada. Sankara addresses the Devi as Chidananda Lahari (a wave of consciousness and bliss). In Sarada the emphasis is on the *chit* aspect while in Lalita Raja Rajesvari it is on the *ananda* aspect.

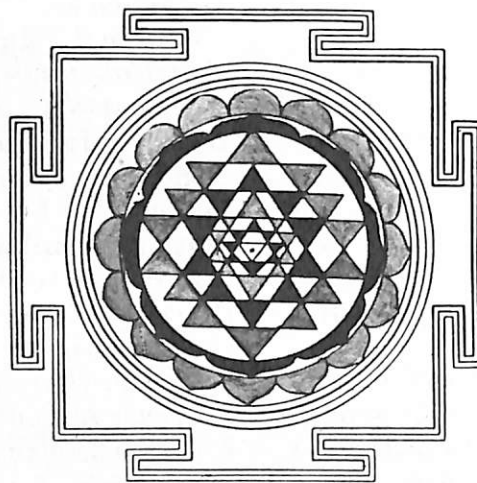
The figure and the conception of Sri Sarada are quite characteristic of the philosophical teachings of Sri Sankaracharya. God-head conceived as Absolute Truth has to transcend the idea of any kind of limitation, including that of sex. Except our own mistaken habits of thought, there is really no justification for the popular conception of God as He. God may, with equal justice and propriety, be considered She. Such an ideal is Sri Sarada. She transcends the three qualified conceptions, known as Trimurtis, and their corresponding Saktis known as Sarasvati, Lakshmi and Iswari. She encompasses all these. This accounts for the fact that Sri Sarada reigns alone in the temple at Sringeri. She is

also called Sarada Parameswari and puja is done reciting the *Lalita Sahasranamam*.

It is usual in other temples in which the Devi is the principal deity to have a Siva Linga or other Murti to represent the Saktiman, the Wielder of the Sakti. But Sri Sarada is both Sakti, the power, and Saktiman, the Wielder of that power, so there is no need for a separate Linga or Murti to represent the Wielder. This

accounts also for the seemingly contradictory contexts in the stotras of the Acharyas when they address her sometimes as Sarasvati, and sometimes as Iswari. Other instances attribute to her the specific features of the three Saktis and sometimes of the Trimurtis as well.

When Sankara established his matha at Sringeri, he first built four guardian temples on the surrounding hillocks, which were to protect



Sri Chakra

the village from dangers, diseases and the forces of evil. On the eastern hillock, he built a temple for Kala Bhairava, on the west for Anjaneya, on the south for Durga, and on the north for Kali. Pujas are still being continued at these temples.

THE TEMPLES

Other Temples and Samadhis

Next in importance to the temple of Sri Sarada is the temple of Sri Vidya Sankara. No visitor to Sringeri can fail to notice it and be impressed with the grandeur of the conception and the architectural art of these times which made such a structure possible. It contains in finely carved stones the essence of the Yoga Sastras, Astronomy and every other subject of practical interest. One must personally see it to appreciate the unique nature of the temple.

The matha compound is studded with a large number of other temples. There is a very ancient temple dedicated to Mahavishnu or Janardana. The temple of Sri Sankaracharya is located in the quadrangle of the old matha building. The smaller temples are mostly samadhis of the previous Acharyas in which Lingas have been installed and are being worshipped. A new temple now marks the place of the samadhi of Sri Sureshvaracharya, next in greatness only to Sri Sankaracharya.

The samadhi of Sri Ugra Narasimha Bharati is in a fine building which contains also the samadhis of his two immediately preceding Acharyas, Abhinava Sacchidananda Bharati and Sacchidananda Bharati. The samadhis of Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati and Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati are on

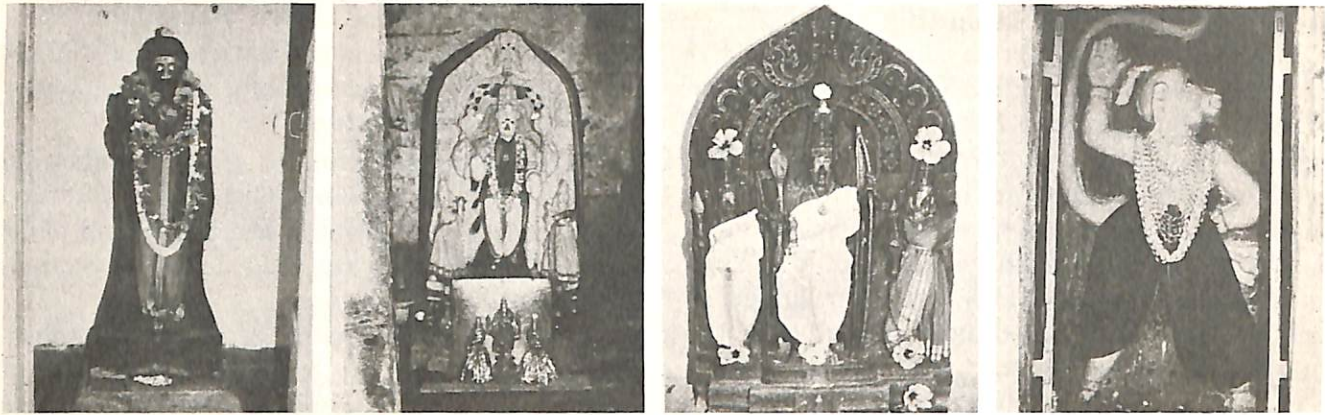
the right bank of the Tunga in Narasimhavanam free from the bustle of the town and are marked by a grand temple containing in their likeness beautiful marble statues.

A similar *adhishtanam* is built adjoining these samadhis for His Holiness Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswami, the 35th head of Sri Sarada matha who attained *siddhi* on September 21, 1989.

Besides temples, mention may be made of other deities that are specially worshipped at Sringeri. These include Bhuvaneshwari, Rama, Brahma, Hanuman, Garuda and many others, besides a large number of Bana Lingas and Saligramas of various sorts. But precedence is given to the Chandramoulisvara Linga, Ratnagarbha Ganapati, Sri Chakra yantra, Sphatika Meru yantra, Sri Sarada and Sri Sankaracharya.

The self-radiant moon which characterises the spotless *sphatika* Chandramouliswara Linga is a phenomenon not to be seen anywhere else. It is held that this Linga was brought from Kailasa and given to Sri Sankaracharya by Lord Visveswara at Kasi. The very deep devotion which the Acharyas show to this Linga is indicative of its worth. It is always kept in the personal custody of the Acharya.

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

*Murtis at Sringeri***Festivals in Sringeri**

Devotees take part in the festivals in Sringeri and also in its branches. The important ones are:

Sankara Jayanti

Vaisaka Sukla Panchami-in the month April-May for five days- specially important in Kaladi and Sringeri.

Vyasa Puja, Varalakshmi Vratam, Krishnash-tami, Vinayaka Chaturthi, Vamana Jayanti, Anan-tapadmanabha Vratam, Umamaheswara Vratam, Saradamba Abhishekam, Ratha Saptami.

Navaratri

Most important festival of Goddess Sarada in Sringeri. His Holiness holds ceremonial Durbar in the traditional fashion. Pujas to Saradamba and Sri Chakra are conducted elaborately by His Holiness. Saradamba is decorated, richly adorned with

priceless jewels and on different mounts each day of the nine days. On the concluding day Chandi Homam is performed with all austerity and magnificence. Goddess Saradamba is taken in procession on the Vijayadasami day.

Maha Sivaratri

Puja is done to Chandramouleeswara throughout the night by His Holiness. He performs puja to Malahanikareswara during the day for several hours.

Vidya Sankara Car Festival, Sarada Car Festival, Malahanikareswaraswami Car Festival, Durga Car Festival, Telugu and Tamil New Year's Day, Sri Rama Navami, Sri Narasimha Jayanti, Kalabhairavashtami, Kartika Deepotsava, Subramanya Shashti and Lalita Panchami.

CHAPTER 3

The Matha

Sri Sankaracharya is the august founder of the Sringeri matha. He combined in himself the highest realisation of Advaita with the most practical knowledge of human welfare. He recognised that the Sanatana Dharma depended upon the resuscitation of the Vedanta philosophy elaborated in the Upanishads as well as on the reorganisation of the monastic life

of India which is the fittest conduit for the flow of the elixir of Vedanta, containing as it does the noblest spiritual realisations of the Indo-Aryan sages.

With that end in view he re-formed and reorganized the entire Indian monastic system and founded four mathas or pithas in each of the cardinal directions of the country.

These are the Kalika matha at Dwaraka (west), the Badrikashrama or the Jyotir matha in the Himalayas (north), the Govardhan matha at Puri (east) and the Sarada matha at Sringeri (south). All these different mathas are associated with different divinities, tirthas, Vedas, Acharyas, Sampradayas, Mahavakyas and titles.

The Sringeri matha has always commanded the highest veneration among the four monasteries though their great founder presumably invested all the mathas with power to adopt their own successor.

He placed his four disciples, Sri Padmapadacharya, Sri Totakacharya, Sri Hastamalakacharya and Sri Sureshvaracharya in charge of the four monasteries in the west, north, east and south respectively.

The divinities associated with the Sringeri matha are the Linga worshipped by Vibhandaka Muni, Varaha Devata, Sri Ramakshetra and Sri Sarada Devi. The sacred tirtha is the Tungab-

The Four Amnaya Mathas

THE MATHAS:	West Dvaraka Kalika matha	North Badarikasrama Jyotir matha	East Jagannatha Govardhana matha	South Sringeri Sarada matha
DIVINITIES:	Siddhesvara Sakti-Bhadra Kali	Narayana Sakti-Purnagiri	Jagannatha (Purushottama, Sakti-Vrsala)	Malahanikara linga; Varaha Sakti-Sarada
TIRTHA:	River Gomati	River Alakananda	Mahodadhi (Bay of Bengal)	The Tungabhadra
ACHARYA:	Sri Padmapada	Sri Totaka	Sri Hastamalaka	Sri Suresvara
VEDA:	<i>Sama</i>	<i>Atharvana</i>	<i>Rg</i>	<i>Yajur</i>
SAMPRADAYA:	Kitavala	Nandavala	Bhogavala	Bhuruvala
MAHAVAKYA:	<i>Tattvamasi</i>	<i>Ayamatma Brahma</i>	<i>Prajnanam Brahma</i>	<i>Aham Brahmasmi</i>
TITLES.	Tirtha Asrama	Giri, Parvata, Sagara	Aranya, Vana	Sarasvati, Puri, Bharati, Aranya Tirtha, Giri, As- rama.

THE MATHA

hadra. The Veda is the Yajur Veda. The Sampradaya is Bhurivala. Sri Sankara empowered the Acharyas of the Sringeri matha to use any of the titles, viz., Saraswati, Puri, Bharati, Aranya, Tirtha, Giri and Ashrama; but the Sringeri gurus have, for some centuries past, preferred to adhere largely to the title of Bharati.

Common Cause

When Sri Sankaracharya established his mathas in the four corners of India, he no doubt intended that they should look after the spiritual interest of the disciples in nearby areas. This is quite different from the idea that he made a distribution of the provinces of India to these mathas with investiture of separate jurisdiction, based on temporal or territorial distinctions.

The Acharya's jurisdiction is over the hearts of the disciples, not over the places where they reside. The attitude therefore of the heads of the four mathas has always been one of brotherhood in a common cause. Each one of them has felt that the welfare of India as a whole was his concern and not merely the provinces close to their matha. Many of them have made tours throughout India and have been received everywhere with the respect due to a spiritual descendant of the great world-teacher Sri Sankaracharya.

Outside Karnataka, the Sringeri matha has

Dasanami Orders

Being a man of intense practicality and possessed of rare organising abilities, Sankara took steps to ensure the continuity of his great work by setting up ten orders of monks--the *paramahansa parivrajakas*, a band of roving and teaching monks--and establishing four Monastic Centres at four corners of India and entrusting them to the care of monks noted for their intellect, character and vision.

Swami Ranganathananda

The theory of four mathas seems to have originated from the fact that the orders of Dasanami *sannyasins* recognise and accept affiliation with only those four mathas. No other matha is recognised by them. Now if there were more mathas of Sankara, why have the Dasanami *sannyasins* limited their affiliation to these four mathas only? The affiliation, no doubt, is only a nominal one and these *sannyasins* neither take *sannyas* from these mathas nor follow any direction or control emanating from them.

Sankara Digvijaya by Madhava Vidyaranya. Translated by Swami Tapasyananda

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

several buildings and properties throughout India; from Hardwar, Kashi and Gaya in the north to Rameswaram, Madhura and Tirunelveli in the south; from Gokarnam in the west coast to Madras, Kanchipuram and Tirupati in the east. The pious offerings are hardly sufficient for the normal expenditure of the matha for most of the income is earmarked for specific purposes like Navratri Puja or the maintenance of the several temples under the management of the matha, leaving only a small margin at its free disposal. When special schemes, such as the Kaladi and Bangalore institutions, are taken up, the matha has to depend upon the support of its devotees.

Acharya Vichara

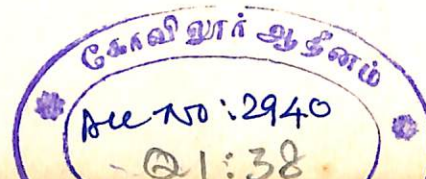
The Sringeri matha has exercised the right of Acharya Vichara, ever willing to guide aright all those who seek its spiritual and moral guidance. Tippu Sultan even permitted the matha to take cognizance of and punish in accordance with the sastras such offences as theft of gold when committed by Brahmin public servants, though such offences were subject to trial by the state only.

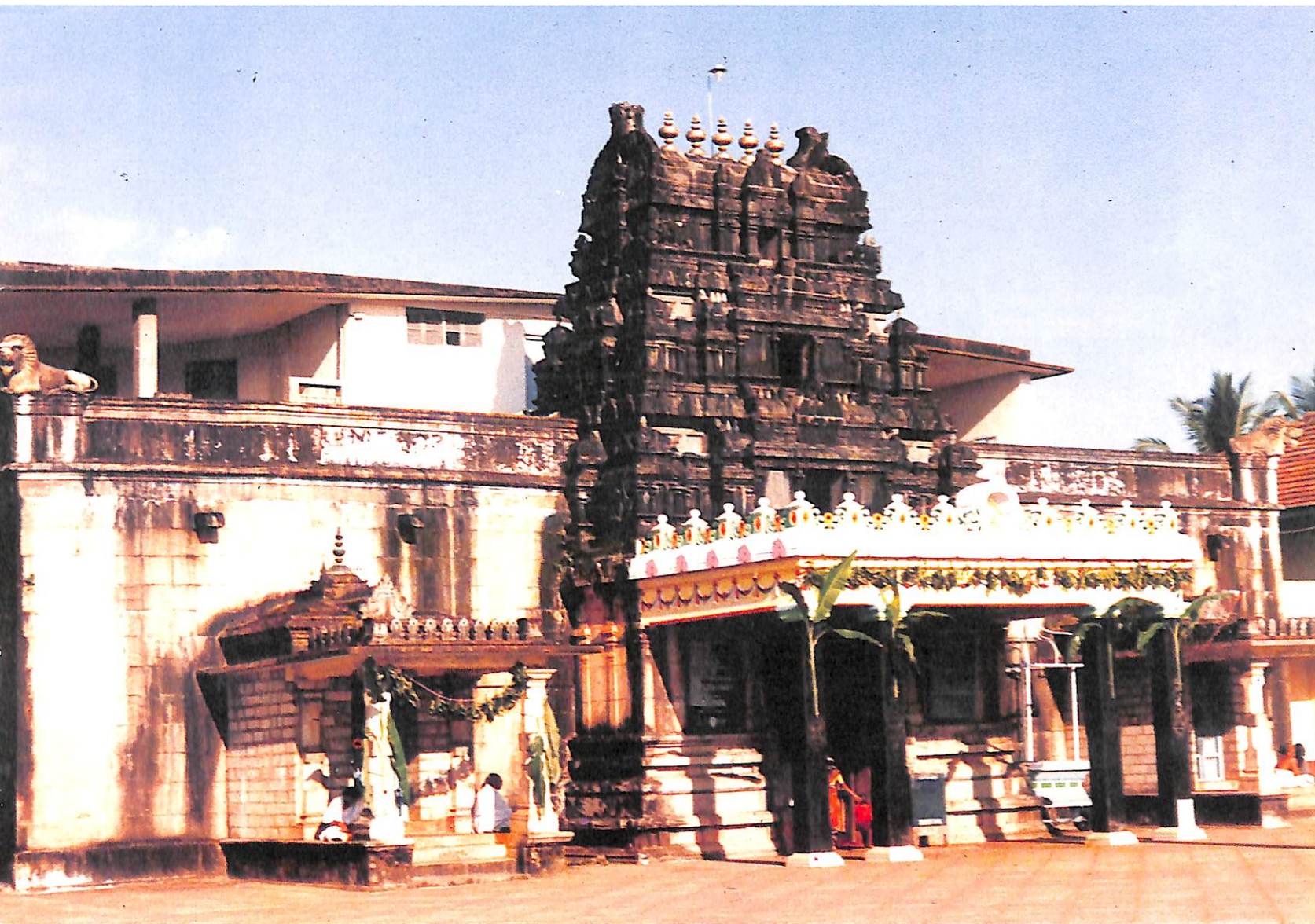
The matha was at full liberty to develop its agricultural, mineral and other resources and it was exempt from customs duties and other taxes. Even the British Government declared in 1839 that no appeal would lie to the Government against the decisions of the matha in regard to the levy of fines or orders passed in matters of

Acharya Vichara.

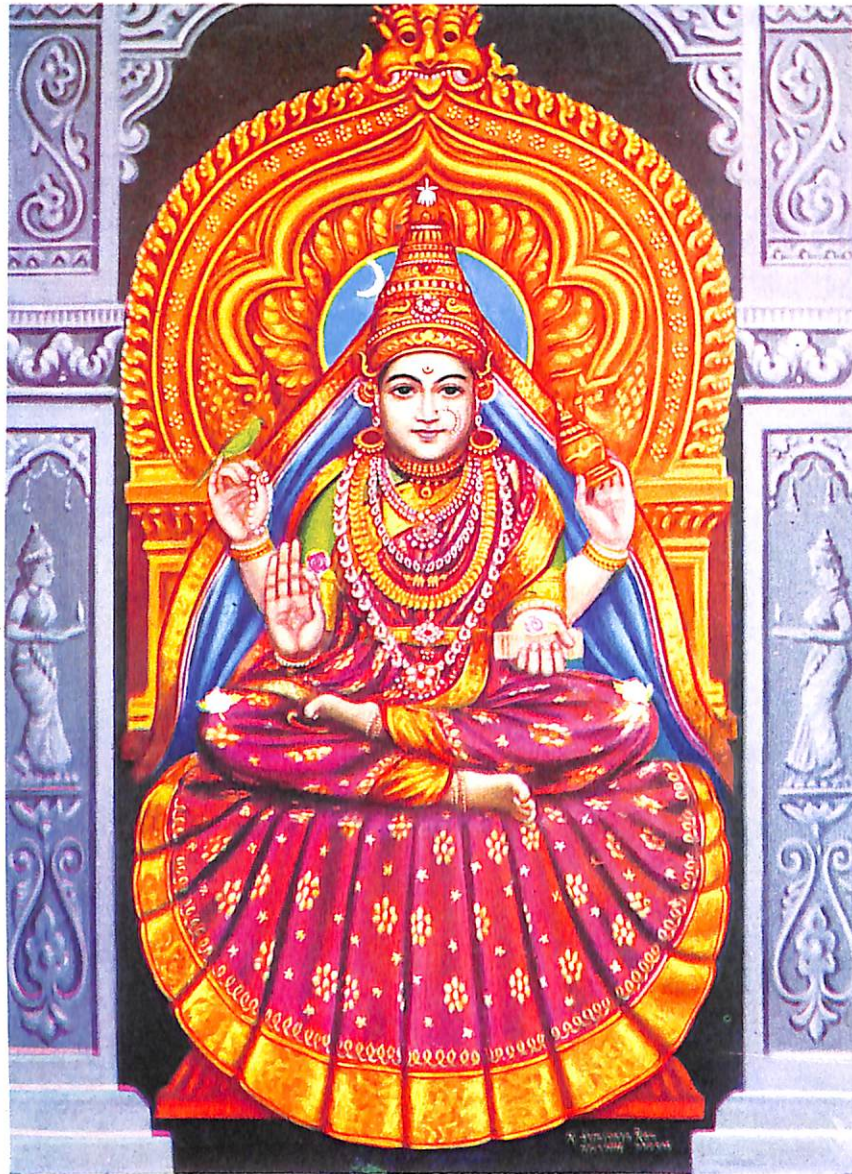
The matha has also enjoyed offerings known as Acharya Sambhavana given by the disciples at the time of marriage, *upanayana* and other ceremonies. These are expected to be collected locally, remitted to the matha, or spent with the permission of the matha in local religious activities. It appears that, before the British came in and for sometime after they did, the Government itself was in the habit of collecting, in addition to its own revenues, a small contribution for "Saṅkaracharya Bhiksha" from the landowners, including it in the pattas issued to them, and handing it over to the matha. Evidently in view of the trouble involved, the Government dropped it, but included it in the Government revenue itself and adopted the alternative of paying a lump sum contribution to the matha.

The records of the Sringeri matha bear ample evidence to the great regard and veneration which the several ruling princes of India, including the Nizam of Hyderabad and the East India Company had for the Acharyas. They had issued orders under the sign manual of their respective Governments that the Government officers should afford all help possible to the Acharyas in seeing that the commands of the latter in regard to religious observances or concerning religious delinquents were strictly enforced and carried into effect. These rulers realized that, if they did not interest themselves





The main entrance to Sri Saradamba Temple



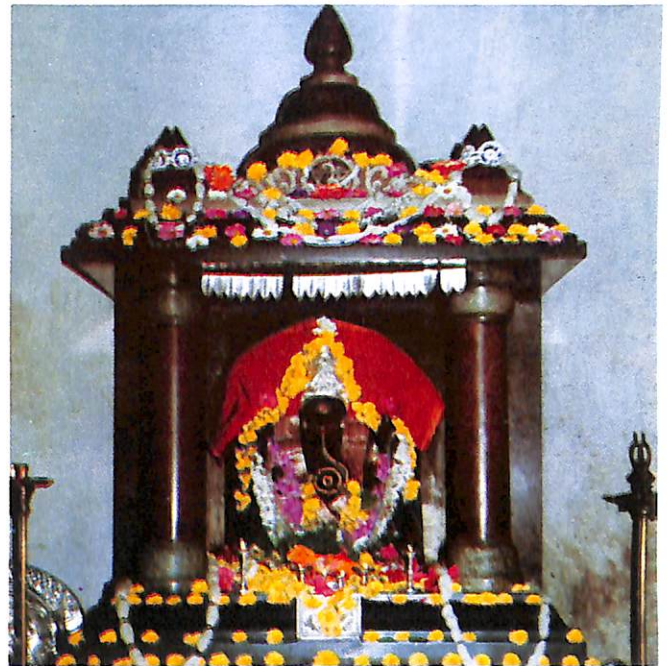
Sri Sarada Devi



Devi Bhuvanesvari



The icon of Sri Torana Ganapati



Sakti Ganapati



Sri Vidyasankara Temple



A close-up of the exquisite sculpture on the exterior of Vidyasankara Temple.



A panoramic view of the



Hoary temples as you enter Sringeri.



Linga.



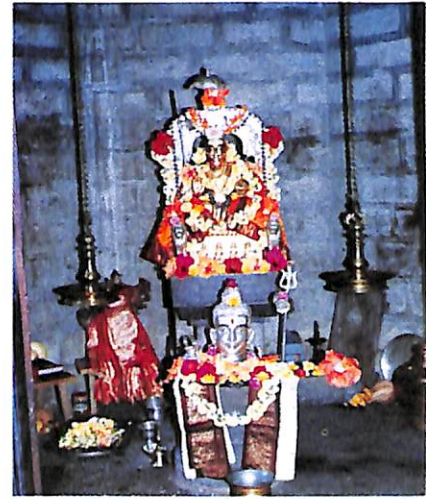
Ganapati.



Sarada in sandalwood.



Trimurtis--Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.



The murti of Adi Sankara



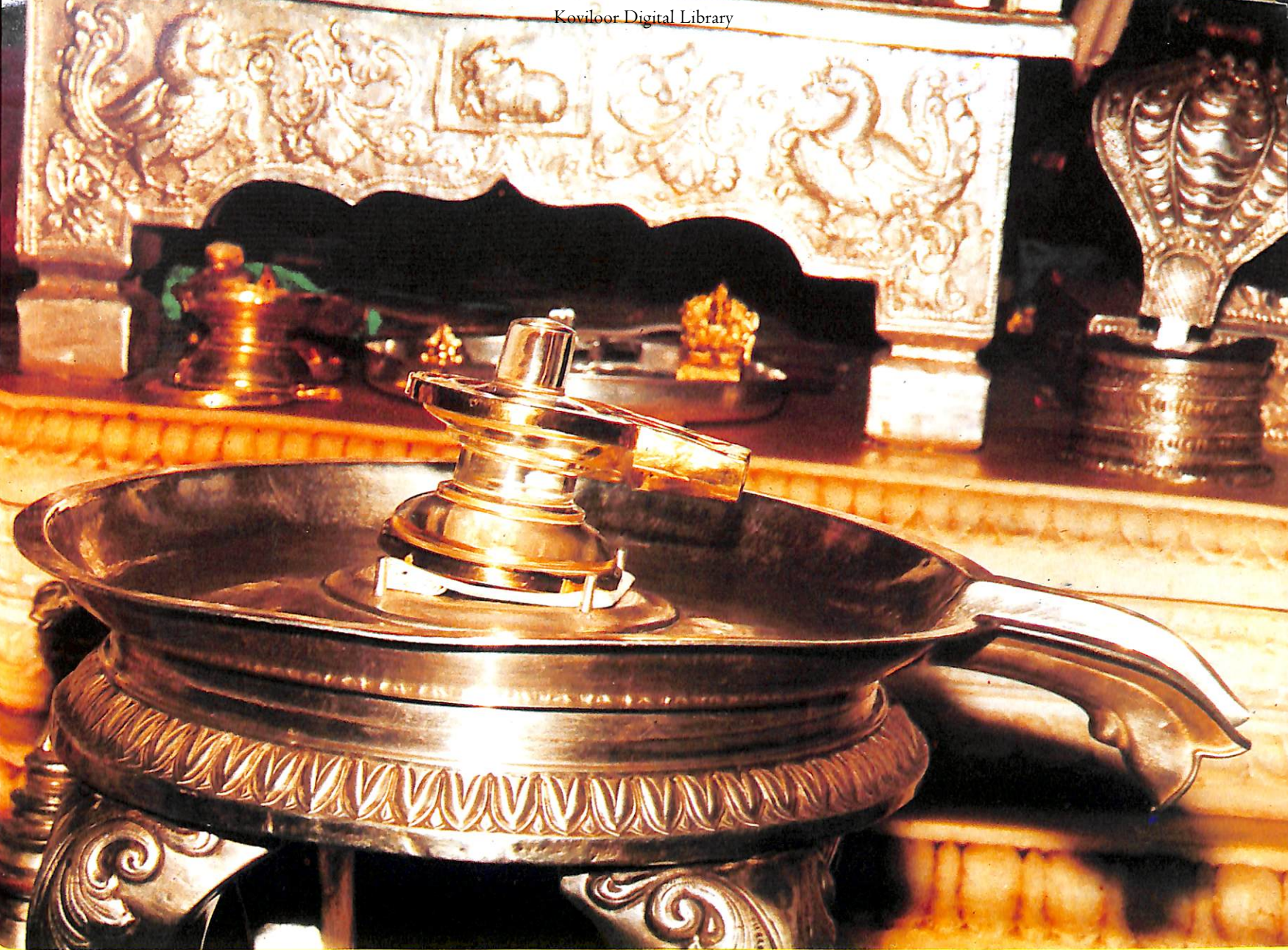
*The four guardian deities at Sringeri-
-Kalikamba, Hanuman, Durga and Kala Bhairava*



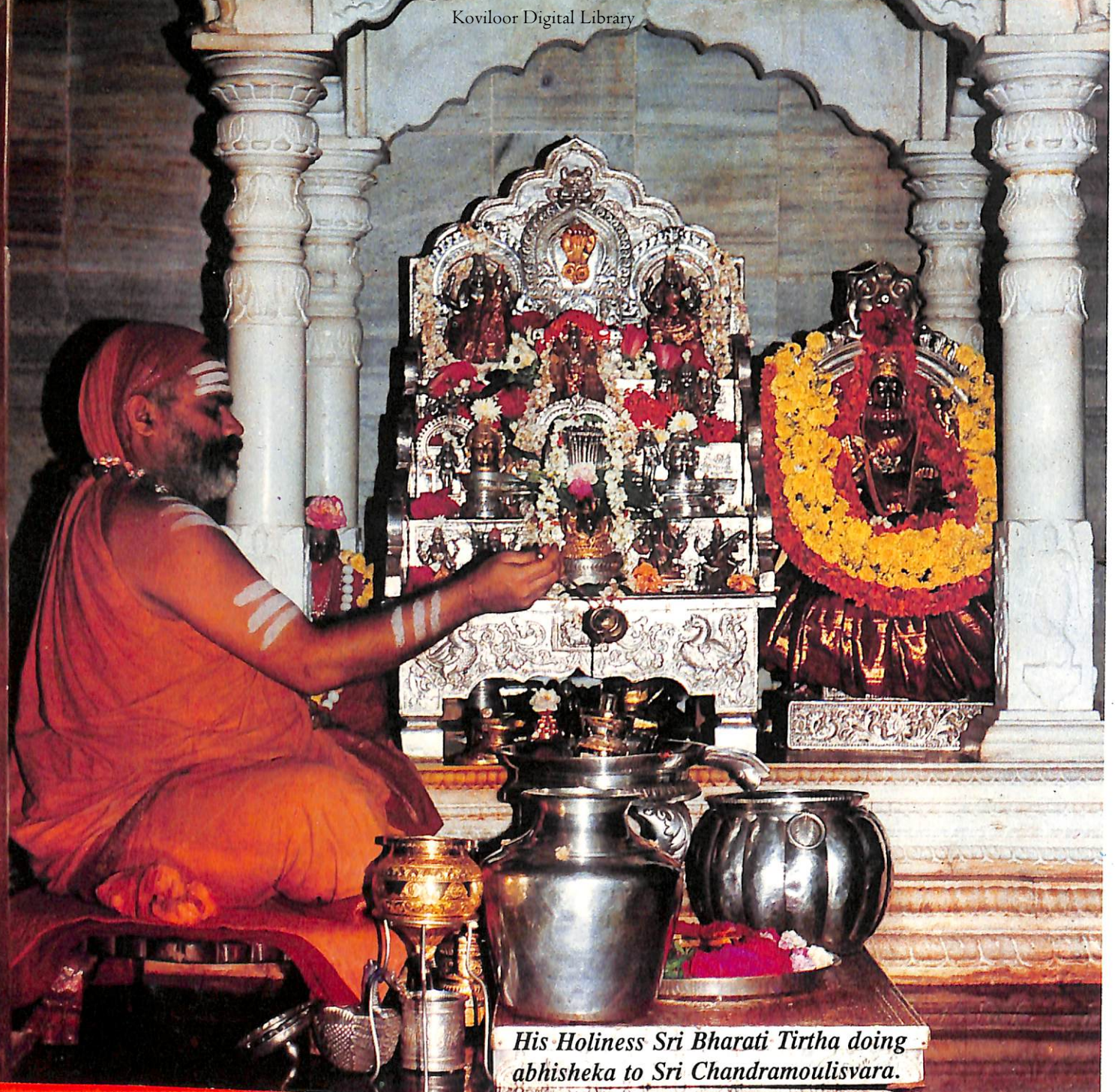
*The icon of Sri Subrahmanya
at Sringeri*



Ratnagarbha Ganapati



Spatika Linga - Chandramoulisvara



*His Holiness Sri Bharati Tirtha doing
abhisheka to Sri Chandramoulisvara.*

THE MATHA

in the maintenance of the respective religions of their subjects, they would be really shirking a grave responsibility.

Varied Institutions

The administration of the properties of the matha is theoretically in the hands of the Acharya himself. But being a *sannyasi*, he rarely interests himself in such secular affairs unless

circumstances necessitate his direct intervention. The central matha at Sringeri and of the several branches throughout India are managed by officers appointed for that purpose.

The Sadvidya Sanjivini Pathasala at Sringeri is a unique institution which is run by the matha without any dependence upon any Government or University. More than a hundred students

Kaditas of Sringeri Matha

The sources of information for the history of Sringeri are vast and varied. If there are, as one category, stone inscriptions and copperplate grants mentioning the dates and the granting of lands, there are, as another category, literary works throwing light on the religious, philosophical and literary activities of the various periods. The monuments of Sringeri are rich in art. They also throw light on the religious and cultural activities of the Matha through the ages. There are nearly 200 sanads and other records in the personal possession of His Holiness, which are of great historical importance. Besides these source materials, there are good number of *Kaditas* or *Kadatas* in the archives of the Sringeri matha.

A *Kadita* or *kadata* is a long piece of cloth covered with a paste, made out of ground tamarind seeds and charcoal powder. When covered with this charcoal paste, it appears like thick black paper. This long piece of cloth is folded in the form of a book running even upto two to three hundred pages, but opens like a roll. The material used for writing on them is white pot-stone or soap stone pencil.

It is to the good fortune of the world of scholars that the Sringeri Matha is preserving a large collection of *Kaditas*. A few of them are kept in the Madras Oriental Manuscript Library. The *Kaditas* are of great historical importance throwing light on the history of the Sringeri *Dharma Samsthana* from the 14th to the 19th century.

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

are studying the Vedas and Sastras there in the traditional method.

Colleges for higher studies in Tarka Vedanta and Mimamsa are maintained in Sri Sankara matha at Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kaladi. The education and training given in these institutions are of a very high standard. The students are provided with boarding and lodging and given every facility to pursue their studies unhampered by other worries. Similar but smaller institutions are run at Nanjangud, Gobichettipalayam, Rameswaram, and several other places.

Sri Sringeri Matha is running a modern 125 bed charitable hospital at Sringeri and OP Clinics at Bangalore and Salem. Schools and Colleges for

imparting modern education is run at Kaladi, Bangalore, Hyderabad and New-Delhi.

Various publications in the cause of propagation of Sanatana Dharma and our age old culture is brought out by the Matha time to time. Monthly and bi-monthly journals are also published in different languages.

Facilities for visiting Pilgrims for stay etc. is provided by Matha at various centres throughout the country including Tirumala, Varanasi, Haridwar, Gaya, Rameshwaram, Srisailam, Gokarna, Kaladi etc.

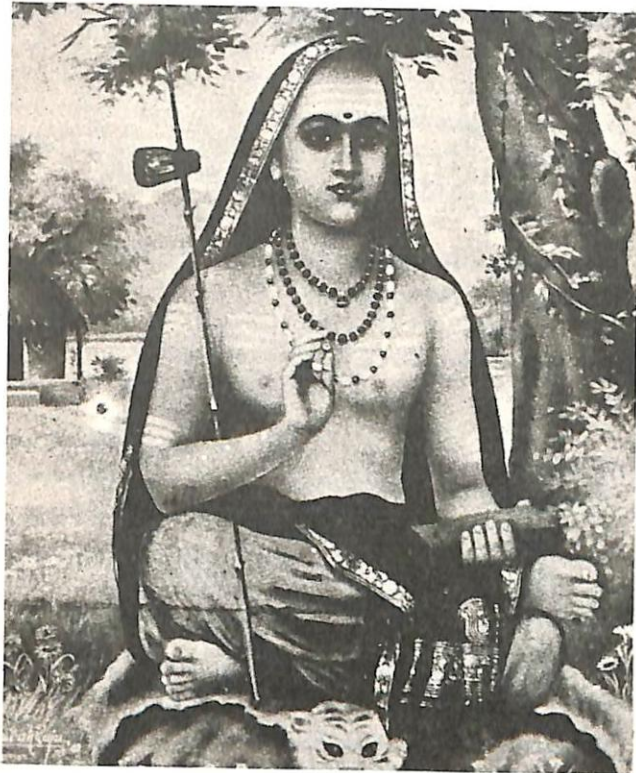
The annual gathering of eminent Pandits from all over India for the Ganapati Vakyartha Sadas, which begins on Ganesh Chaturthi day, is a grand and imposing function. The Acharya himself presides and takes active part in the discussions on several *sastras*.



**Publications of Sringeri Matha--
Sankara Krupa (monthlies),
Tattvaloka (bi-monthly).**

CHAPTER 4

Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada



The permanent charm of the name of Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada, the founder of the Sringeri matha, lies undoubtedly in the Advaita philosophy he propounded. It was based on Upanishads and augmented by his incomparable commentaries. He wrote for every one and for all time. The principles which he formulated, systematized, preached and wrote about know no limitations of time and place.

It cannot be denied that such relics of personal history as still survive of the great Acharya have their own value. It kindles our imagination to visualise him in flesh and blood. It establishes a certain personal rapport instead of a vague conception as an unknown figure of the past.

Sankara Vijayas

To those who are fortunate to study his valuable works, devotion and gratitude well up spontaneously in their hearts. His flowing language, his lucid style, his stern logic, his balanced expression, his fearless exposition, his unshakable faith in the Vedas, and other manifold qualities of his works convey an idea of his greatness that no story can adequately convey. To those who are denied the immeasurable happiness of tasting the sweetness of his works, the stories of his earthly life do convey a glimpse of his many-sided personality.



THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

Date of Sankara

Prof. Max Muller and Prof. Macdonell hold the view that he was born in 788 AD. and died in 820 A.D. That he flourished in the first quarter of the ninth century is also the opinion of Prof. Keith.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

Of the chief incidents in his life, there is not much variation among the several accounts entitled "Sankara Vijayas." Sri Sankara was born of Sivaguru and Aryamba at Kaladi in Kerala. He lost his father in the third year. He received Gayatri initiation in his fifth year. He made rapid strides in the acquisition of knowledge. In his eighth year he obtained with great difficulty the consent of his mother and took up sannyasa. He started in quest of a competent teacher. And eventually found Govinda Bhagavatpada (the disciple of Gaudapada) on the banks of the Narmada. He stayed with his Guru for a while. Under his command, he went to Kashi and Badari where he composed his unrivalled and unequalled Bhashyas on the Prasthanatraya.

He went to meet Kumarila Bhatta, the champion of Karma Mimamsa. It was too late to hold any discussion with him, as he had commenced the penance of slow death as a means of expia-



Lord Siva blessing the couple Sivaguru and Arvamba with a son.



Sankara wins his mother's reluctant permission on the pretext of being caught by a crocodile.

SRI SANKARA BHAGAVATPADA

tion. As directed by Kumarila Bhatta, Sankaracharya went to meet his foremost disciple Viswarupa, also known as Mandana Misra. The debate with Misra, his eventual conversion to the views of Sri Sankara and his taking up *sannyasa*, as Suresvaracharya, are all well-known.

Sankara then started on a tour of religious revival throughout India. He condemned un-*sastric* practices, and re-established Vedic observances. He rid the society of many evils and restored the Vedic religion, in its philosophical and practical aspects to its pristine purity and glory.

To safeguard the maintenance of this purity in the future, he established four mathas in four directions. He entrusted them to the charge of his four foremost disciples. He ascended the Sarvajna Pitha in Kashmir. Before his 32nd year he had completed this colossal work. It is beyond one's comprehension how he found time and energy for such accomplishment. In addition, he composed the great mass of literature that stands to his credit.

Unique Philosophy

He stands unique in the religious history of the world. As a philosopher he demonstrated that the religion of the Vedas was the only religion wide enough to embrace all faiths and philosophies. He had no quarrel with the

believer who conceived of God as capable of manifestation in an image. Neither did he disagree with the abstract philosophers who could not conceive of God as the Personal Ruler of the universe. Sri Sankaracharya felt that the former's standpoint was as logical as the latter's.

He was able to perceive that there were many points of view, contradictory because no one had a full perspective of the Reality. He was prepared to say to both of them, "You are right" He felt that they were right so far as they went. He disagreed only when they presumed to say that their conception of what was right exhausted all.

He has made a place in his system for every variety of thought and practice. His system is like a huge edifice. It gives room for any kind of structure, architecture or ornamentation. He finds in the Vedic religion an infinite storehouse of thoughts and precepts suited to every possible temperament and stage of spiritual development.

The great Acharya realized in all its fullness the significance of such a religion. He was able to reconcile all the warring creeds and sects. The grateful world in its turn recognized him as a world-teacher or Jagadguru. Though his special forte was the enunciation of the Nameless and Formless Absolute, he was credited at the same time with the establishment of the six common

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

forms of Hindu religious worship. This earned for him the title of Shanmata Sthapanacharya.

Without Classification

He was the most acute of philosophers. He was the most devoted of devotees. He preached the doctrine of the Self to a point he practically denied God any part in the regulation of our affairs. At the same time he enunciated the seemingly contradictory doctrine that all our activities and its results depended on God and God alone.

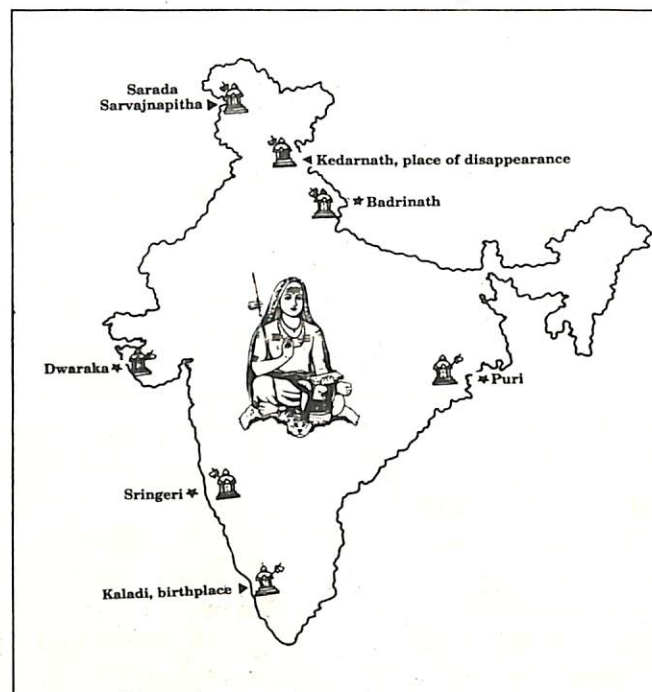
His idea of renunciation was so high as to require us to throw off everything that we call ours. He found nothing inconsistent in a king retaining his kingdom and attending to his duties, while being a renunciate in the heart. It is very difficult to understand, more so to appreciate, such a teacher. It was easy for him to descend to the level of others, place himself in their position and appreciate their attitude or conduct. However it is not so easy for others to rise to his level of supreme eminence. Before his breadth of vision, all things fade into insignificance.

Sri Sankaracharya as an intellectual phenomenon is as inscrutable as the Absolute, which he sought to explain to the sense-bound world in expressions of seeming limitation. As a devotee, he is equally elusive of any classification. He is a bhakta of Siva, as much of Vishnu

and, in fact, of any other deity of the Hindu religion. He was a bhakta of the One who manifests in the all.

His intellectual grasp was unrivalled. His emotional piety was unequalled. He was the severest of logicians. At the same time he was the most uncompromising upholder of 'authority'. In short, he defies catagorisation.

★ Adi Sankara's Four Amnaya Mathas



Tributes to Sankara Bhagavatpada

Sankara was the foremost among the master-minds and the giant souls which Mother India has produced. He was a giant metaphysician who expounded systematically the Advaita philosophy.

A practical philosopher, an infallible logician, a dynamic personality, and a stupendous moral and spiritual force that he was, his grasping and elucidating powers knew no bounds.....

It took 30 years for the well known Sanskrit professor Max Muller to translate the commentaries of Rig Veda, written by Sayana. There is a little interesting incident that when the original was found to be illegible in some places he got an authorised transcription from the first original still preserved in the Sringeri Matha through the influence of the then Maharaja of Mysore....

Many are the mathas and monasteries in India where holy men or their successors sit and where Hindus from all parts of India gather but none so great or so famous as Sringeri the original seat of Adi Sankaracharya.....

The Sringeri Peetha is one of the oldest monasteries of the world flourishing for over 12 centuries now.

His Holiness Swami Sivananda

In his short life of 32 years, Sankara achieved that union of sage and saint, of wisdom and kindness, which characterises the loftiest type of man produced in India.

Will Durant

*

A single individual, whose only companion was his vast intellect and deep sympathy, going the length and breadth of India and conquering its mind and heart is something unique in history--even in Indian history. Sankara captured both the intellects and hearts of men. He established an empire of the spirit, of love and of lofty spiritual idealism. From the example of Sankara we can picture the greatness of a person who sways the world in this manner.

We have in Sankara a great intellectual and at the same time one who commanded the emotional allegiance of the masses. Today in Hindusthan if there is one teacher of the historic period who commands the allegiance of both the intellectuals and the masses it is Sankara.

Swami Ranganathananda
in Eternal Values for a Changing Society

In a brief life of 32 years Sankara did the work of many long lives, and left such an impress of

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

his powerful mind and rich personality on India that it is very evident today. He was a curious mixture of a philosopher and a scholar, an agnostic and mystic, a poet and saint, and in addition to all this, a practical reformer and an able organizer. He built up, for the first time within the Brahminical fold, ten religious orders and of these four are very alive today. By locating his four great monasteries in the north, south, east and west, he evidently wanted to encourage the conception of a culturally united India. These four places had been previously places of pilgrimage from all parts of the country, and now became more so.

*Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
in Discovery of India*

*

The life of Sankara makes a strong impression of contraries. He is a philosopher and a poet, a savant and a saint, a mystic and a religious reformer. Such diverse gifts did he possess that different images present themselves, if we try to recall his personality. One sees him in youth, on fire with intellectual ambition, a stiff and intrepid debator; another regards him as a shrewd political genius, attempting to impress on the people a sense of unity; for a third, he is a calm philosopher engaged in the single effort to expose the contradictions of life and thought with an unmatched incisiveness; for a fourth, he is the

mystic who declares that we are all greater than we know. There have been few minds more universal than his.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

Western people can hardly imagine a personality like that of Sankaracharya. We contemplate with wonder and delight the devotion of Francis of Assisi, the intellect of Abelard, the virile force and freedom of Martin Luther, and the political efficiency of Ignatius Loyola; but who could imagine all these united in one person?

Sister Nivedita

Sankara (788-820), Indian philosopher, the leading exponent of Advaita Vedanta, non-dualism, and author of commentaries on the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Brahma Sutra which are known for their profundity of spirit and subtlety of thought. Sankara attempts to build a spiritual view of life on rational foundations: by reasoning we find that the world is not self-maintaining and must have a cause which is transcendent to it. In spiritual experience we apprehend the reality of this Absolute spirit which is called Brahman. The difference of knower, known, and knowledge disappear when the Supreme Reality is known.

New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th Edn.

CHAPTER 5

The Disciples Of Sri Sankara



Of the large number of disciples who had the rare and inestimable privilege of serving the great Acharya Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada, four stand out prominent. Each one of them was unrivalled in his own way: Padmapada for intense devotion, Totaka for exemplary service, Hastamalaka for supreme self-realisation and Sureshwara for deep learning.

Sri Padmapadacharya

In the land of the Cholas, on the banks of the Kaveri, there was a devout Brahmana called Vimala. He was blessed with a boy. While in his teens he mastered all the Vedas and showed an extreme distaste for worldly life. He earnestly hoped for a guru who would lead him across the ocean of samsara. Refusing to marry, he travelled with the purpose of finding such a guru. Fortunately for him, Sri Sankara was staying at Kashi, expounding his inimitable Bhashyas. The boy Padmapada resplendent with Brahma-Tejas ran to him and threw himself at his feet. The Acharya perceived the learning, courage and earnestness of the new-comer. He accepted him as his disciple. He initiated him into the sannyasa Asrama under the name of Sanandana.

He was the first of Sankara's disciples. He was first in more than one sense. His unrivalled devotion so pleased the teacher that, in appreciation of his earnest search for truth, the Acharya took the trouble of explaining to him his works thrice. This partially engendered in the other disciples a feeling of misgiving, which the Acharya immediately took care to eradicate.

When Sanandana and a few other disciples were once on the other bank of the river Ganga, the Acharya called them to come to him. No boat was available. But Sanandana, secure in the faith and grace of the Acharya, stepped on the

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

water and began to walk. Struck with his devotion, the divine Ganga showed her admiration by placing lotuses on the water to support his feet at every step. To the astonishment of all, he unconcernedly crossed over to the other bank where he was duly rewarded by the embrace of the Acharya. It was a mark of affection which no other disciple had ever received. In memory of this incident, he was henceforth known as Padmapada at the desire of the Acharya.



There is a famous incident of his saving the life of the Acharya. A devotee of Bhairava, a Kapalika took advantage of the nobility of the Acharya. He begged him to give his head as an offering to the terrible Bhairava. The Acharya willingly consented. But he warned that his head must be taken without the knowledge of his disciples, especially of Padmapada.

When the disciples had all gone to have their bath in the river, the Kapalika came. He found the Acharya in samadhi. He raised his sword to smite and sever the head. Unfortunately for him, Padmapada intuitively divined the nefarious intention of the Kapalika. By force of his meditation on Lord Narasimha, he assumed the latter's form. He pounced upon the Kapalika and tore him to pieces. Having done this, he sent up a terrible roar of triumph. His co-disciples rushed to the spot and the Acharya rose from his samadhi. He was as much astonished as the others. With great difficulty, he made Padmapada resume his form. They were all surprised to learn that in his Purvasrama, Padmapada was a staunch devotee of Narasimha. He had contemplated on that Murti while doing penance on the hills of Ahobila.

Padmapada also related an incident. A hunter asked him what he was doing in the forest. When told that he was seeking Narasimha, the hunter said that there was no such being as he knew every inch of the forest. Padmapada insisted that indeed there was such a being and described minutely the form of man-lion. The hunter said that he would produce the man-lion the next day before sun set.

The hunter roamed about in search of the elusive being. Failing to catch it in the stated time, he decided to take away his life. Narasim-

THE DISCIPLES OF SRI SANKARA

ha was pleased with the hunter's devotion and steadfastness. He appeared before the hunter who immediately put the rope round the neck of Narasimha and dragged him to the presence of Padmapada. Surprised beyond measure, Padmapada could not help asking the incarnate Deity how it happened. Sri Narasimha replied that even Brahma had not shown such earnestness in contemplation as the illiterate hunter.

Sri Totakacharya

Totakacharya had neither the learning of Sureshvara and Padmapada nor the realisation of Hastamalaka. But he was unrivalled in scrupulous personal attention to the Acharya. He found pleasure in looking after the personal comforts of the Acharya as a devoted servant. His co-disciples naturally entertained a lesser idea of his intellect. Even Padmapada was not free from this misconception.

Once when Totaka had gone to the river for washing clothes, the Acharya waited for his arrival before he would begin his exposition. The other disciples were impatient. Padmapada could not restrain himself. He said: "Why should we wait for one who is no better than a wall?" Sri Sankara naturally did not relish this remark. He felt the necessity to teach Padmapada. So by a mental flash he endowed Totaka with all the knowledge of sastras.

When Totaka returned from the river he was



literally in bliss. He addressed the Acharya in a few brilliant stanzas in Totaka metre. Since then, known before as Giri, he got the title of Totakacharya. He was counted among the foremost of Sri Sankara's disciples. He condensed the essential teaching of the Upanishads in a small treatise. This is called *Sruti Sara Samuddharana* composed in the same Totaka-metre.

Sri Hastamalakacharya

In the village called Sribali there was a learned Brahmana named Prabhakara. He was very rich. But neither his learning nor his affluence gave him any pleasure as his only son appeared to be an idiot. The boy was as lovely as Cupid, as lustrous as the sun, pleasant like the moon, and patient like the earth. But he behaved like an idiot. It was with great difficulty that his *upanayana* was performed. He

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI



never played, never talked, never got angry and never studied.

When Sri Sankara chanced to go to that village, the boy was about 13 years of age. The anxious father took his son to Sankara to see if anything could be done for him. In his first glance, the Acharya realised the greatness of the boy. He asked him who he was. The boy answered the question in chaste Sanskrit verse, expounding the real nature of the Self.

As the boy was not suited to the life of a householder, the Acharya accepted him as his disciple and gave him sannyasa. As the essence of truth had been so lucidly explained by the boy, like a gooseberry in one's palm, he was named Hastamalaka. His extempore verses had the rare distinction of being commented on by the illustrious Acharya himself.

Though he attended the classes held by the Acharya, it was more to verify his own experience than to gain proficiency in dialectics.

It was suggested to the Acharya that, by reason of his realisation of the Self, Hastamalaka was pre-eminently competent to write a Vartika (Sanskrit commentary in verse) on the Sutra Bhashya. The Acharya negated the suggestion by pointing out that Hastamalaka's plane of consciousness always dwelt on the supernal Self. He would not stoop to write books. When the Acharya placed him on a higher level than those engaged in dialectics, the disciples were naturally curious to know how one who was not known to have devoted any attention to learning the sastras could be proficient in realisation. Sri Sankara explained the phenomenon.

On the bank of the Jamuna, a great sage was seated in contemplation when some brahmin girls came there to bathe. One of them had a baby two years old. She placed him by the side of the sage and asked him to take care of it till she bathed. The baby slowly crawled into the river and was drowned. The mother was aghast.

She took out the dead body of the child and wept bitterly before the sage. The sage who was quite oblivious of the happenings awoke from his samadhi. He was moved by pity for the grieving mother. By the powers of his yoga, he left his body and entered the body of the child. The dead child sprang into life. That child was Hastamalaka. This explained how he came to have such an all-comprehensive knowledge without any apparent instruction.

CHAPTER 6

Sri Suresvara Acharya

Sri Suresvara Acharya was the most talented disciple of Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada, who placed him as the chief of Sringeri Sarada matha in the south.

Though Sri Suresvara was a disciple of Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada, the fact remains that he was elder to the preceptor, contrary to the normal age relation that exists between a preceptor and his disciple. The relation between Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada and Sri Suresvara Acharya was unique. In his character, he combined the humility of a disciple belonging to the ancient Indian spiritual tradition and the robust independence of a free thinker.

It is an interesting fact that Sri Suresvara Acharya (then known as Mandana Misra) became a disciple of Sri Bhagavatpada after a defeat in a polemical combat of wits. Yet it was a very successful failure. He took the defeat in all humility. He became a most sincere and true disciple.

The influence which emanated from the personality of Sri Suresvara Acharya was ineffable like music and beauty. Its claim upon others was great because of its revelation of a spontaneous self-giving. This is the very reason why the Sringeri Sarada matha at which he presided, gathered an evergrowing loyalty of the loftiest kind. Simplicity was the essence of his life at Sringeri where he lived for a long time.

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

Even before becoming a disciple he was in the centre of the world of Vedic, traditional scholarship of his times. It is however not the revelation of his great scholarship, but the great challenge he faced, the course he opted, of flowing generosity and atonement, and the prophetic understanding he displayed that made him great as a person and as a type.

The Vedic Tradition

The Vedic tradition is continued in the two Mimamsa schools. Poorva Mimamsa along with the Uttara Mimamsa or Vedanta, is only the direct continuation of the Vedic culture. The Poorva Mimamsa system took the ritualistic tradition of the Vedic culture. It helped a methodical interpretation of the otherwise complicated Vedic injunctions about rituals. It also supplied a philosophical justification for the beliefs which formed the source and authority for the rituals.

Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada heard of Kumarila Bhatta, the leader of one of the two branches of the Poorva Mimamsa school of philosophy. Kumarila Bhatta's acceptance of the Vedic authority was total. He did not care to admit the existence of God. The great powers of argument of Kumarila Bhatta and the stories of his miraculous deeds in vanquishing well-known Buddhistic scholars to reestablish the authority of the Vedas were almost known to

everybody in the land. According to Kumarila Bhatta, the Vedas are eternal like the world.

When Sri Bhagavatpada heard of Kumarila Bhatta, he was immolating himself in a fire of husk as an act of expiation. Sri Bhagavatpada asked the great Vedic scholar to stop the act of immolation, and come out to argue with him because the Poorva Mimamsa attitude to the existence of God was not correct. It was so even according to the authority of the Vedas which the Poorva Mimamsa scholars accepted as supreme. Kumarila Bhatta explained that in deference to Vedic injunctions, for which mission his life was devoted, the act of immolation should not be stopped in the middle. He had to purify himself according to his own convictions.

Mandana Misra

Kumarila Bhatta however requested Sri Bhagavatpada to go to Mahishmatipura to meet his disciple Mandana Misra and win him over to Advaita. He also added that the superiority of the Advaita doctrine will be revealed to the world if Mandana Misra gets defeated in a combat of logic.

Kumarila Bhatta described Mandana Misra as the dearest of his disciples, and a great scholar in all branches of learning. Sri Bhagavatpada blessed Kumarila Bhatta and accepted advice for the debate with Mandana Misra.

SRI SURESVARA ACHARYA

Contrary to the normal course of a disciple seeking a guru to earn his grace by devotion, loyalty and service, it was Sri Bhagavatpada who went to Mahishmatipura in search of a disciple.

The Magadha empire, with Pataliputra as its capital, stretched far and wide in those days. Mahishmatipura was an important town in the extensive Magadhan empire. The storeyed buildings of the city were high and eclipsed the sky from view.

Sri Bhagavatpada reached the city of Mahishmatipura with his followers. The passers by in the street gave him a graphic description of the place of Mandana Misra.

It was like a Royal Palace because of Mandana Misra's affluence. His father Hima Mitra was an honoured pandit in the court of the Kashmir kings. He belonged to Kannauj Gowda Brahmin community. Mandana Misra received the best of traditional training at the feet of Kumarila Bhatta and perfected his scholarship. He settled at Mahishmatipura as a house-holder with his wife Ubhaya Bharati. She was the daughter of learned and pious Vishnu Mitra living on the banks of Sonabhadra river.

Mandana Misra and Ubhaya Bharati were an ideal couple each of them equal to the other in all branches of learning, ethical character and strict observation of Vedic injunctions. Ubhaya

Bharati was supposed to be an *avatara* of goddess of learning, Saraswati Devi, as Mandana Misra was supposed to be the *avatara* of Brahma. His scholarship and the reverence in which he was held earned him the honorific epithet of "Mandana Misra". His real name is lost to posterity.

When Sri Bhagavatpada reached the mansion of Mandana Misra, it was found bolted from inside. Sri Bhagavatpada, as a sannyasi, had no right of admission into a house found closed. Such are the rules of Smriti which govern the daily conduct of traditional sannyasis. Sri Bhagavatpada pondered a little. He had firmly decided to redeem Mandana Misra from the rigidity of dogmatic ritualism. Therefore he felt like using his extraordinary Yogic powers on the occasion. Great Yogi and Siddha Purusha as he was, Sri Bhagavatpada entered the house through the closed door.

Unwelcome Sannyasi

Mandana Misra had an innate dislike for sannyasis because in his staunch belief of ritualism, he felt that only those who wished to escape the rigours of Vedic injunctions found a refuge in the *sannyasa asrama*. Moreover when Sri Bhagavatpada entered the house, it was a time when the presence of a sannyasi was most unwelcome. Mandana Misra was performing a *shraddha* and the Brahmins were about to be

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

fed. The entry of Sri Bhagavatpada at such a time caused disturbance and Mandana Misra was infuriated.

Hot and harsh exchanges followed. The Brahmins found the situation going out of control. They wished to set it right. They suggested to Mandana Misra to invite Sri Bhagavatpada to participate in the *shraddha* by occupying *Vishnu Sthana*. Staunch ritualist as he was, Mandana Misra was fully bent upon saving the ritual. He invited Sri Bhagavatpada accordingly.

But Sri Bhagavatpada declined to accept the invitation. He explained to Mandana Misra that he did not come for *bhiksha* but for a polemical debate. Mandana Misra who had never met his match in learning before was willing for a dialectical fight. He gladly welcomed it. The *shraddha* was allowed to be finished as ordained. The debate was fixed for the next day.

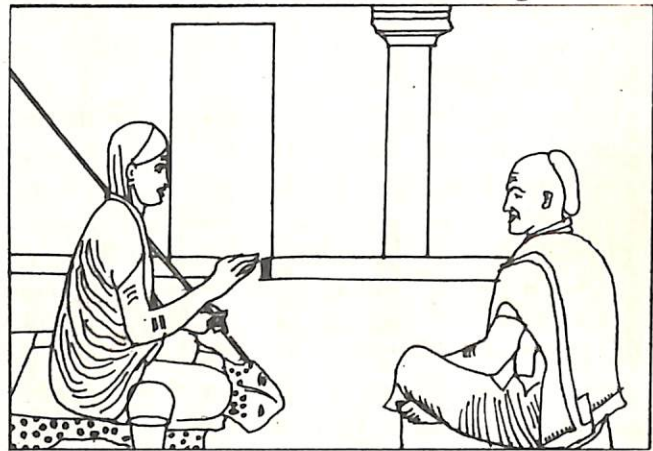
The Eight-day Debate

They met the next day after daily ablutions normal to their respective *asramas*. Ubhaya Bharati, the wife of Mandana Misra, agreed to serve as the umpire as they both sought her help expressing confidence in her impartiality and appreciation for her wisdom and scholarship. She was the only scholar available who could follow the disputants in their flight to sublime heights.

As Ubhaya Bharati was a house-wife, with

her daily chores which included the preparation of daily food for the disputants, she gave them each a garland of flowers. She said that the person whose garland faded away first was the person vanquished. To make the dispute more purposeful, they agreed to a wager. The person worsted in the debate should become the disciple and accept the *asrama*, way of life of the victor.

They were giants of erudition, both of them supreme in the knowledge of the Vedas. The discussion continued daily without hindrance to their daily rituals, rest and other exigencies.



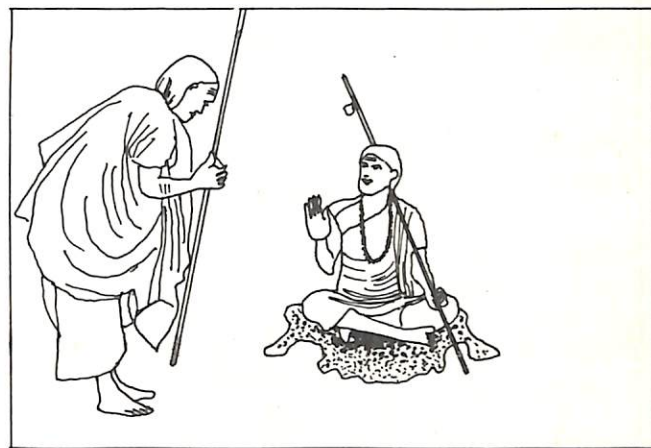
From day to day, Mandana Misra saw new light in the arguments of Sri Bhagavatpada. He was losing faith in his own past convictions. His faith in Bhagavatpada was growing to a stimulating climax.

SRI SURESVARA ACHARYA

On the eighth and the last day of the discussion, Mandana Misra was fully convinced of the superiority of the doctrine of Sri Bhagavatpada. As Sri Bhagavatpada said, "Once the conditioning factor (the nescience) vanishes, the soul becomes one with the Brahman." When Mandana Misra realised the limitations of his own standpoint and the truth of Sri Bhagavatpada's view, he found that his flower garland had faded. He fell prostrate before Sri Bhagavatpada, touched his feet and said in a trembling voice, "O Teacher of the world! Pardon me and my audacity. I have offended you for these eight days. Hold your fury, O Jagadguru! and shower your grace on this humble servant."

Ubhaya Bharati disappeared from the mortal vision and regained her celestial form as Sarasvati Devi, the goddess of knowledge. She however granted a boon to Sri Bhagavatpada. That she would be immanent at a place where he may invoke her presence. Mandana Misra gave all his earthly belongings to the needy at the last Vedic ritual which he performed before he took sannyasa at the hands of Sri Jagadguru Sankara Bhagavatpada.

Sri Bhagavatpada gave his disciple the name of Sri Suresvara Acharya. He took him on his march from place to place. Soon Sri Bhagavatpada reached Sringeri where he invoked the presence of goddess of knowledge. He installed Sri Suresvara Acharya as head of the matha.



Mandana Misra accepts sannyasa from Sankara.

Sri Suresvara Acharya wrote elucidating metrical commentaries (*Vartikas*) on the *Taittiriya* and *Brihadaranyaka Upanishadic Bhashyas* of Sri Bhagavatpada. Sri Suresvara Acharya also wrote commentaries on the *Dakshinamoorti Stotra* and *Panchikarana* of Sri Bhagavatpada. The commentary on *Dakshinamoorti Stotra* became famous as the *Manasollasa Vartika*. He also wrote a succinct monograph presenting an analytical picture of the fundamental teachings of Sri Bhagavatpada. This book became well-known as *Naishkarmya Siddhi*. Sri Suresvara Acharya also wrote a commentary called *Balakrida* on the *Smriti of Yajnavalkya*. Next to Sri Bhagavatpada, he stands as the foremost author in the field of Advaita.

CHAPTER 7

The Early Acharyas

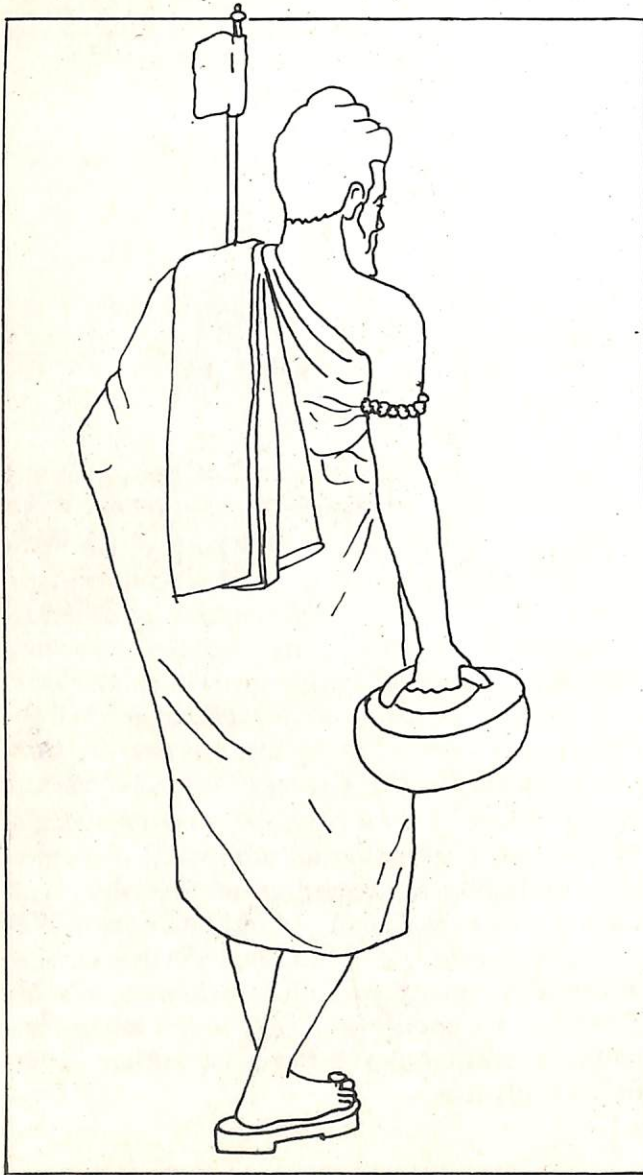
Just as all things that exist have their beginning in the One that exists without being born, so all knowledge has its beginning in that One who knows without the need to learn. From Him, the first manifested Being learns and imparts that knowledge to those that follow.

It is the normal practice for *sannyasis* to remember and pay respect every day to their immediate gurus and also to their guru's gurus. On Guru Purnima day, the full moon in the month of Ashada which also coincides with Vyasa Puja, they are enjoined to worship all the great spiritual teachers who have upheld the traditions of *Brahma Vidya* from time immemorial. On this day on the camps of the Jagadgurus and other mathas the processes of worship are elaborate.

Sringeri Guru Parampara

The guru parampara or "teacher tradition" is in some places divided for convenience into three groups: the "Divyogha"--the divine group, the "Sidhogha"--the semi divine group, and the "Manavogha"--the human group of gurus.

Therefore, in the succession list of the gurus the Lord Himself, Sadasiva, the Ever Pure is the first. From Him, Narayana derives his



THE EARLY ACHARYAS

knowledge and passes it on to Brahma. These form the divine group.

Then in succession come the great sages, Vasishtha, Sakti, Parasara, Vyasa and Suka, the knowledge being imparted from father to son. From Sukacharya, it passes on from teacher to disciple. His disciple was the famous Gaudapadacharya, the author of the *Mandukya Karikas* and from him Govinda Bhagavatpada received the knowledge and imparted it in turn to Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada. These form the semi-divine group.

The human group of gurus includes all the four disciples of Adiguru Sankaracharya. Each worshipper traces his own direct line of spiritual descent to one of Sankara's four disciples.

The Sringeri Guru Parampara starts with Sri Sankara as the first Acharya and Sri Suresvara as the second. The latter was succeeded by 3. Nityabodhaghana. 4. Jnanaghana. 5. Jnanottama. 6. Jnanagiri. 7. Simhagiri. 8. Iswara Tirtha. 9. Narasimha Tirtha.

Sri Suresvara's successor was Sri Nityabodhaghana. He is sometimes identified with Sarvajnatman, the author of the *Samkshepa Sarirakam*.

Sri Jnanaghana was the author of *Tattvasudhi*. Scholars rightly place him in the second half of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth century. *Tattvasudhi*, which is held in high

esteem, is probably a record of the Acharya's exposition to his disciples.

The Janardana temple in Sringeri must have been consecrated by Sri Jnanaghana. According to *Guruvamsakavya* he worshipped Pinakin and Janardana.

Sri Jnanottama succeeded Sri Jnanaghana and he was a gauda settled in the south. He was addressed as Jagadguru (guru of the three worlds) in a famous work by one of the disciples. His work *Vidyasri* is a subcommentary on the *Brahma-sutra bhasya*.

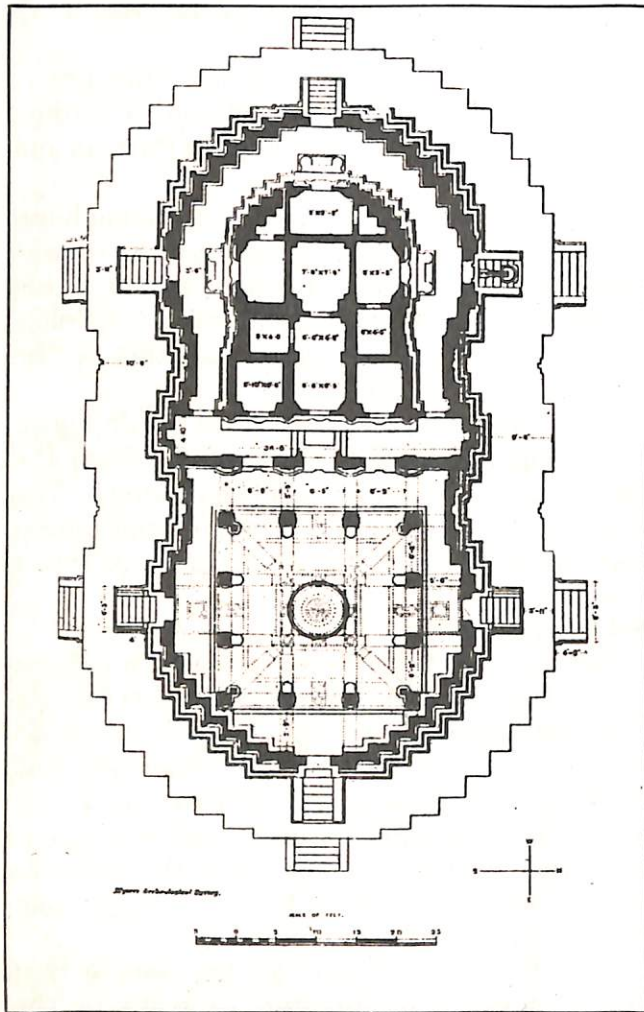
Sri Jnanottama's successor was Sri Jnangiri. Then reigned Sri Simhagiri, after whom the *agrahara* near Sringeri has been named. The next two Acharyas were Sri Iswaratirtha and Sri Narasimhatirtha. All of them were great polemicists.

Sri Vidya Tirtha

The tenth Acharya was the illustrious *Vidya Tirtha*, a great Yogi. The exceptional reverence that this sage commanded from his esteemed disciples, Bharati Tirtha and Vidyaranya, and the kings of Vijayanagara, indicates his greatness. They erected a beautiful edifice in stone, Sri Vidya Sankara temple, over the chamber into which he retired in Lambika Yoga consciously to cast off his human body.

One distinctive feature of the temple that bears mention is the hall in front of the

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI



An interior layout of Vidyasankara Temple.

Garbhagriha, which is symmetrical and has a dome in the centre resting on 12 pillars arranged in a circular form. On these pillars are carved in order the figure of the 12 signs of the Zodiac.

There are three small low gateways on the east, north and south, opening into the hall. The rising sun throws its rays only on the pillar on which is carved the Rasi, in which the sun is then travelling and on no other pillar throughout that solar month. The skill of the architect (whose name is Jakkana according to the *Guruvam-sakavya*) and the genius of the two sages Bharati Krishna Tirtha and Vidyaranya, who conceived the ideas and guided their expression in stonework, baffle our minds.



Vidyasankara Temple with exquisite sculpting.

In this connection it is worth mentioning the history of an image preserved and worshipped at Simhagiri (old-Sringeri) a few furlongs from Sringeri. It has four faces on which are respectively carved the figures of Vidya Tirtha (with his two disciples Bharati Tirtha and Vidyaranya), Brahma, Vishnu and Iswara. Lakshmi Narasimha is carved above these and the top is surmounted by a Linga.



Lambika Yoga

It is said that this image was shown by Sri Vidya Tirtha as the model of the shape which his body would assume after 12 years of undisturbed Lambika yoga. He insisted on the condition that, after he entered the chamber for the Lambika Yoga, it should be sealed and the lid should not be opened for 12 years. Unfortunately, idle curiosity prevailed and someone opened it when only three years had expired.

The body of the sage had disappeared and in its place was found, in the course of transformation, only the form of the topmost Linga shown in the sample. Bharati Tirtha and Vidyaranya were greatly perturbed. They were informed by Vidya Tirtha in a dream that the promised phenomenon would not occur as his instructions were not followed. They were to install another Linga. Accordingly, a fresh Linga was consecrated under the name of Vidya Sankara over the chamber into which Vidya Tirtha had disappeared. The model image at Simhagiri was itself consecrated as Chaturmurti Vidyasvara and worship was instituted.

It is strongly believed that this great Yogi is still in the chamber in Lambika Yoga. It is said that the Deva Ganas worship him every night and that sometimes the ringing of the bells by them is heard at dead of night. For this reason, all the Srimukhas issued from the matha today go under the seal of Sri Vidya Sankara only.

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

Sri Bharati Krishna Tirtha

We pass on to Sri Bharati Krishna Tirtha who, though the younger brother of Vidyaranya, assumed the *sannyasa asrama* three years in advance of his brother. Both were natives of Ekasila Nagara, or Warangal, as it is popularly called. Bharati Tirtha started on a tour of pilgrimage and came to Sringeri in due course. Under the holy influence of Vidya Tirtha, he prayed for and obtained admission into the *sannyasa asrama*.

Bharati Krishna Tirtha was the senior disciple and succeeded his guru as the 11th Acharya in 1333. He occupied the throne for 47 years until 1380. It was one of the most momentous periods in the history of India as the great Hindu Empire of Vijayanagara was founded during that time in 1336 by Vidyaranya. He felt that the only way of preserving the sacred religion of the land was to retain the temporal power in the hands of Hindu rulers.

He was also aware that intrinsic merit, which commanded respect and obedience from the lay public, was passing away rapidly. If the Acharyas of the sacred institution founded by Sri Sankaracharya were to retain their influence for good, the institution must be placed in a position of temporal independence. It must be so conducted as to attract the attention of the devotees

and retain the hold on their minds.

Golden Image of Sarada

He accordingly consecrated a golden image of Sri Sarada in the place of the sandalwood image that was probably installed in the time of Sri Sankaracharya. He renovated the temple and also the matha buildings. In the year of founding of the Vijayanagara kingdom, the Vidya Sankara temple also was built.

In 1346 king Harihara and his brothers donated nine villages for the undisturbed performance of His Holiness's *tapas* and the support of the 40 Brahmin attendants. His brother Marappa and son-in-law Ballapa went to Sringeri under king's orders and presented the grant to Sri Bharati Krishna Tirtha. This is the earliest grant traceable and is inscribed on a stone slab preserved there.

King Bukkaraya, the second king of Vijayanagara, on his accession to the throne proceeded to Sringeri and after receiving the blessings of the Jagadguru made a liberal grant of lands to him. On the occasion of the consecration of Sri Vidya Sankara temple, the Jagadguru divided lands yielding 600 pagodas into 120 *vrithis* of five pagodas each and gave them away to 120 learned brahmins who were persuaded to accept the land and settle near the matha. This was the beginning of the present town of Sringeri.

CHAPTER 8

Sri Vidyaranya

Sage and Empire Builder



Sri Vidyananda, coming five centuries after Sankara Bhagavatpada, was the 12th Jagadguru of the Sringeri Sarada matha from 1380 to 1386. He brought fame and glory to the

matha by his dynamic leadership and unique contributions to spiritual and Vedantic thought.

Sringeri, a cluster of hermitages, became a spiritual imperium with state jurisdiction during his pontificate. To the *Vyakhyana Simhasana* in the Sarada matha was added secular authority over the newly created *samsthanam* which served to enthuse a courageous spirit of unity and self-confidence among the people of south India.

Sri Vidyananda was a great force in the regeneration of our spiritual, moral and cultural values. He built temples at Sringeri and Hampi and established mathas to propagate Vedanta. He was not only a sage and empire builder, but also a savant and scholar. His works constituted the greatest treatises in post-Sankara Advaitic literature in which he brought to bear a synthetic spirit. His marvellous interpretative skill reconciled many apparent differences in philosophic texts.

No other thinker and writer acquired a reputation close to that of Adi Sankara in spreading the truths of Advaita. Special importance has been given to two of Vidyananda's popular works on Vedanta--*Panchadasi* and *Jivanmukti Viveka*. As invaluable treatises to the *sadhak* and *sannyasi*, they are famous for their clarity of thought and abundance of quotations from well-known texts.

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

Sannyasa Diksha

Tradition has it that Vidyaranya, whose pre-ascetic name is not known for certain, was the elder of two *brahmachari* brothers belonging to a poor but learned brahmin family of Ekashilanagari (present-day Warangal). The younger of the two, wandering south in search of true knowledge, reached Sringeri when the great Vidya Sankara Tirtha was the reigning pontiff. On seeing the innate greatness of the young *brahmachari*, Sri Vidya Tirtha readily gave him *sannyasa diksha* with the ascetic name of Bharati Krishna Tirtha, in 1328. After Sri Vidya Tirtha attained *nirvana* by entering into *lambika yoga samadhi*, Sri Bharati Krishna tirtha succeeded him as the 11th Jagadguru on the Sringeri matha and reigned from 1333 to 1380.

In the meanwhile, the elder *brahmachari*, whom we may call Madhava, left home in search of his younger brother. After much wandering, he finally reached Sringeri where he found his brother Bharati Krishna Tirtha. At his request Sri Vidya Tirtha readily gave him *sannyasa diksha* in 1331 under the ascetic name of Vidyaranya, in other words, verily a Forest of Knowledge. Sri Bharati Tirtha, though younger than Vidyaranya became his senior by virtue of his earlier ordainment into *sannyasa Ashrama*, and came to be known as the senior *Sripada*, and Vidyaranya the junior.

Sri Vidyaranya then started on a pilgrimage and reached Kashi. At the direction of Sri Vyasa, he went to Badarikasrama, where the great sage himself initiated him into Sri Vidya. Returning south, he retired to Matanga hill, near Hampi, where he immersed himself in intense meditation.

It was at this time that the two brothers, Madhava and Sayana, sons of Mayana of Bharadwaja Gotra, approached Sri Vidyaranya and sought his blessings. Sri Vidyaranya graciously gave them his unfinished *veda bhashyas* and some other works. He blessed them to complete the works in their own names. Later, both the brothers served as ministers to Bukka Raya and Harihara I & II.

Birth of Vijayanagara

It was while Sri Vidyaranya was doing tapas at Matanga hill that the two warrior brothers, Harihara and Bukka, sons of Sangama, approached him. Directed by a dream, they sought his blessings and guidance. Earlier, these two brothers had been taken prisoner and led to Delhi. It is believed they were under compulsion to embrace Islam. But the Delhi ruler recognising their valour sent them back to the south at the head of an army to contain the rebellions brewing in the Deccan.

Seizing this opportunity, the two brothers asserted their independence. With the guidance



and blessings of Sri Vidyaranya, they established their own independent kingdom with its capital on the left bank of Tungabhadra river. Following the sage's counsel they shifted the capital to the right bank, naming it Vidyanagara, as a mark of respect and gratitude to the sage, whom they regarded as their guru, God and saviour. The city, which came to be popularly known as Vijayanagara or City of Vic-



The founders of Vijaya Nagara, Harihara and Bukka seek the blessings of Sri Vidyaranya.

tory, was planned in accordance with the directions of sage Vidyaranya, in the form of a Sri Chakra, with the Virupaksha Temple in the middle and nine gates all around.

A copper plate grant of 1336 bearing the sign manual "Virupaksha" recounts that "Harihara was seated on the throne as directed by Vidyaranya. He made the 16 great gifts resplendent in the city called Vidya, of vast dimensions..." The emperor placed at the feet of his master Sri Vidyaranya all his imperial insignia. Sri Vidyaranya initiated him into Atmavidya and conferred on him the titles, Srimad Rajadhiraja Parameshwara, Aparimita Pratapavira and Narapatin. From then on, the Sringeri Jagadguru came to be addressed as "Karnataka Simhasana Pratishtapanacharya" which is part of their *birudavali* even to this day.

Jagadguru's Greatness

Sri Vidyaranya then resumed his pilgrimage to Varanasi. While he was there, Sri Bharati Tirtha at Sringeri had already started construction of the magnificent Vidya Sankara temple over the tomb into which his guru Sri Vidya Tirtha had entered into *Lambika Yoga Samadhi*.

Bukka and Harihara who were sharing the responsibilities of ruling their empire and who were marching from victory to victory, went to Sringeri (1346) for the blessings of Sri Bharati

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

Tirtha. They celebrated the occasion with a land grant to the senior *Sripada*.

Bukkaraya communicated all the details to Sri Vidyanaraya in Kashi, forwarding to him Sri Bharati Tirtha's *srinukha*. It desired his early return to Sringeri which Sri Vidyanaraya complied with, reaching Sringeri via Hampi, accompanied by Bukkaraya. At Hampi, Sri Vidyanaraya had built a matha near the Virupaksha temple, for his use. After Sri Bharati Tirtha attained *videha mukti*, Sri Vidyanaraya assumed charge of the Sringeri matha and reigned as Jagadguru for six years from 1380 to 1386.

Sri Vidyanaraya was indeed a unique personality, scholar and sage, rightly regarded as a great thinker in the post-Sankara period. No wonder he was extolled and virtually raised to divinity by kings Bukka and Harihara when making royal grants:

(1) "Sri Vidyanaraya's powers of exposition are more wonderful than those of Brahma; he can make (by his dialectics) the eloquent dumb and (by his teaching) the dumb eloquent."

(*Copper Plate - May 1384*)

(2) "Can he be Brahma? We do not see four faces; can he be Vishnu? He does not have four hands; can he be Siva? No oddness of the

eyes is observed. Having thus argued for a long time, the learned have come to the conclusion that Vidyanaraya is verily the Supreme Light incarnate."

(*Sringeri Plate of Harihara II - May 1386*)

Works on Vedanta

Sri Vidyanaraya's literary contributions comprise works on *vyakarana*, *mimamsa*, *smriti*, *purana*, astronomy/astrology, *mantra sastra*, music, *darsana* and Advaita Vedanta. The more important of them are *Jaiminiya Nyayamala*, *Parasara-smriti Vyakhyana*, *Smriti Sangraha*, *Vyavahara-Madhava*, *Sri Vidyanartha-Dipika*, *Vivaranaprameya Sangraha*, *Panchadasi*, *Jivanmukti Viveka*, *Drig Drisya Viveka*, *Aparokshanubuthi-Tika*, and six *Upanishad-Dipikas*.

Madhaviya Sankara Vijaya is the work of Sri Vidyanaraya. Because of its high poetic merit and objectivity, it is considered the best for recitation during *Sankara Jayanti*.

Sri Vidyanaraya was the head of the Sringeri matha for only a short span of six years. But because of his association with Sri Bharati Tirtha (his predecessor Jagadguru and *poorvasharma* brother) for over five decades, he left an indelible mark on the spiritual life of his times. He is rightly considered as one of the brightest jewels in the illustrious line of Sringeri *Guru Parampara*.

CHAPTER 9

The Intermediate Acharyas



When Vidyaranya was far advanced in age, he nominated Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati as his successor. Some time after the nomination, with the permission of his Guru, the disciple went away on a pilgrimage to several sacred places. In the meantime King Harihara of Vijayanagara visited Sringeri and pressing invited Sri Vidyaranya to his capital. As the matha required constant attention, the Acharya entrusted the management to a later disciple Sri

Narasimha Bharati and then left for Vijayanagara. He stayed there for some time as the honoured guest of the king, and passed away at a ripe old age.

(13) *Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati* heard of Sri Vidyaranya's demise and hastened to Vijayanagara. The king took him to Sringeri and had him installed on the seat. Sri Narasimha Bharati—who was temporarily in charge of the matha with the permission of his senior, went to live at a village called Haladi. He consecrated a Sri Chakra there and spent his time in worshipping the Divine Mother and did *tapasya*. When in course of time Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati passed away, Sri Narasimha Bharati was called from Haladi and installed as the next Acharya.

Great Spiritual Bulwark

(14) *Sri Narasimha Bharati* had, in addition to his own intrinsic merit, the advantage of having acted as the deputy of Sri Vidyaranya. He so impressed all by his spiritual greatness and universal love that he came to be looked upon as an incarnation of God Narasimha himself in a benign form.

King Harihara of Vijayanagar felt that the Acharya would be a great spiritual bulwark to his kingdom and invited him to the capital and arranged for his stay there for some time. During that period, the Acharya not only initiated the king in appropriate *mantras*, but also

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

gave him valuable guidance in political affairs and inspired him to carry out many works beneficial to the subjects.

After the Acharya returned to Sringeri, the king again sent an envoy to invite him. The Acharya stayed at Vijayanagara for a few months. The king founded a town for him in an attractive place at the junction of two rivers in the Tulu region and arranged for the residence there of a large number of sannyasis and other disciples. He also endowed extensive lands. The matha at that time came to hold lands with an aggregate permanent revenue of 3,003 pagodas.

The Acharya returned to Sringeri but, as he felt impelled to see again the new town, he went back. When he found that it was given the name of Narasimhapura, he had a temple built for God Narasimha and, after its consecration, returned to Sringeri.

King Harihara who was already old at the time of the installation of the Acharya passed away and was succeeded by his son Virupaksha, also known as Pamparaja. The king did not rule long and was succeeded by Bukka and Devaraya.

Unabated Royal Respect

A change in the personage of the king did not affect in any way the respect that the royal family had for the Acharya. King Devaraya was a staunch devotee and invited the Acharya to

Vijayanagara. By his discourses he instructed all people, particularly the king, to follow strictly the path of Dharma. He attained *siddhi* in Vijayanagara. A shrine was erected over his *samadhi* and a Linga installed.

As Sri Narasimha Bharati did not nominate any successor, the king and other disciples naturally felt anxious but were able to persuade one of his disciples, (15) Sri Purushottama Bharati, to accept the responsibility of presiding over the matha.

The Acharya is said to have written a very learned and explanatory commentary on Pantanjali's *Mahabhashya*. Later, he visited the Tulu region and was given a fitting reception by its chieftain Sankara. He went to the matha, worshipped the goddess Narasimhi, and arranged for erecting the eastern Gopura of the temple of God Narasimha. He then returned to Sringeri.

His disciple Sankarananda or Sankara Bharati visited Vijayanagara at the invitation of king Devaraya II, the emperor at that time. He was presented with a grant of the village of Kanguvalli.

We are indebted to poet Vishnu for most of the information about the successors of Vidyaranya. It hardly needs to be stated that the Acharyas, by their exemplary lives and spiritual attainments, commanded the greatest respect and devotion of all those who came in

THE INTERMEDIATE ACHARYAS

contact with them.

When Purushottama Bharati passed away in 1448, he was duly succeeded by (16) Sankara Bharati. After him came in succession (17) Chandra Sekhara Bharati II and (18) Narasimha Bharati II and then (19) Purushottama Bharati II.

Krishna Deva Raya

By this time the Harihara dynasty had steadily declined, and in 1490, one of the powerful generals, Narasimha Naik, became the King. His second son Krishna Deva Raya ascended the throne in 1499, setting about a consolidation of the empire and added greater glory to Vijayanagara.

On the eve of his expedition against his powerful foe King Virarudra Gajapati of Kalinga (Orissa) in 1516, he sent word to the Acharya Sri Purushottam Bharati praying for his blessings. The Acharya deputed a disciple called Vidyaranya to proceed to Vijayanagara in person and convey to the king his blessings. The occasion coincided with the celebration of the Dasara festivities and was commemorated by the grant of a village called Huyyaru. The object of the grant was stated "to secure to the king a three-fold benefit, the destruction of his foes, unswerving attachment of his supporters and allies, and extension of his own life, health and prosperity."

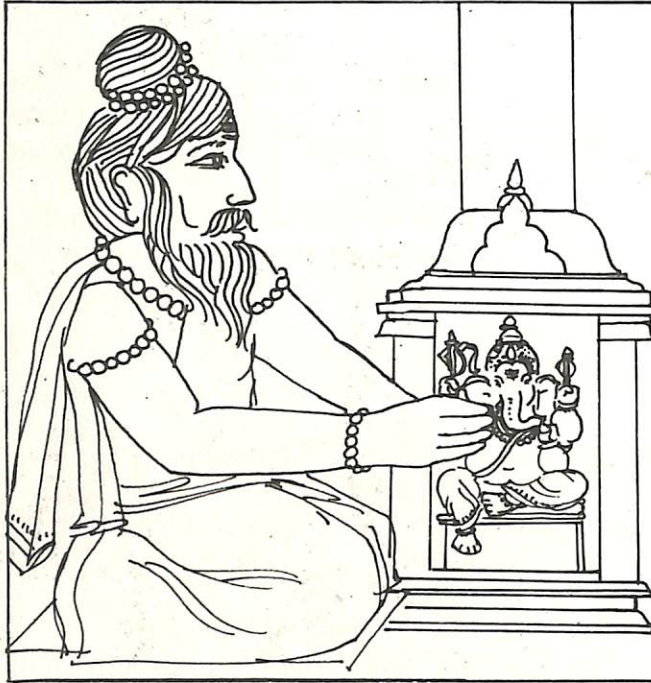
The campaign was so successful that all the impregnable fortresses of the enemy fell into the hands of the emperor. The king Gajapati fled to the hills and led a miserable life till he surrendered unconditionally. The generous emperor granted him pardon and protection and received the hand of the king's daughter which was offered as a bond of peace.

Purushottama Bharati was succeeded by (20) Sri Ramachandra Bharati who reigned for over 40 years. Sadasiva Raya was the emperor of Vijayanagara then and, evidently, it was under his orders that his commander Honnappa Naik granted to the Jagadguru the village of Bastihalli in 1545.

Sri Ramachandra Bharati was succeeded by (21) Sri Narasimha Bharati III. It was during his period that the famous battle of Talikota was fought resulting in the dismembering of the Vijayanagara Empire and in the feudatory chieftains claiming to be independent rulers. His successor also was called (22) Sri Narasimha Bharati IV (1573-76) who, in turn, was succeeded by (23) Sri Narasimha Bharati V.

The Acharya has written a work called *Vaidika Nirnaya* in which he has demonstrated that it is only Advaita that is in full conformity with the teachings of the Vedas. His successor was also called (24) Sri Narasimha Bharati, but with a prefix "Abhinava" (the New).

CHAPTER 10

The Later Acharyas

Any visitor to the Malahanikaresvara Temple on the hill in the centre of Sringeri town will have noticed the strange phenomenon

of a stone pillar which sounds hollow at the back and has a protrusion in the front resembling the figure of Sri Ganesa. When (24) Sri Abhinava Narasimha Bharati visited this temple for the first time, he noticed the absence of any Ganesa image and immediately taking up a piece of turmeric drew an outline of Ganesa on the pillar and offered puja. Ever since then, the image of Sri Ganesa is slowly but steadily bulging out in full relief making the granite stone hollow inside.

The feudatory chiefs of the Keladi dynasty belonged to the Lingayat persuasion, but their respect, devotion and service to the Sringeri Jagadguru were unbounded. Venkatappa Naik of Keladi, himself a great scholar, composed many songs which are still remembered and sung with zest. He was a staunch follower of Advaita and has donated six golden *stupis* for Vidyasankara Temple. He invited the Acharya to his capital Ikkeri in 1601 and granted him lands yielding 50 pagodas in memory of this visit.

The Acharyas by their erudition, spiritual eminence, purity of life and universal love commanded the admiration and respect of all, prince and peasant alike, irrespective of the state of the country. Even in the dominions of the contemporary Deccan Mahommedan kings, whether they were at war with Vijayanagara or at peace,

THE LATER ACHARYAS



the privileges of the Sringeri Jagadgurus were duly respected and continued without any interference or obstruction.

Sri Sacchidananda Bharati

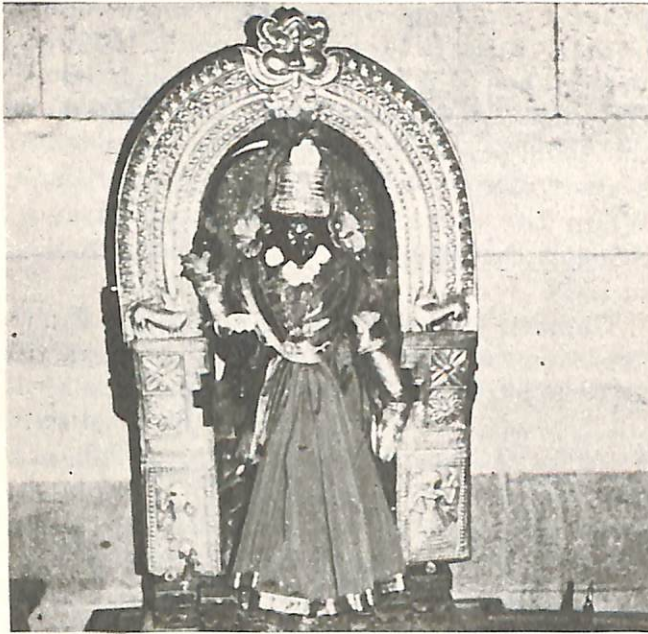
Sri Narasimha Bharati was specially proficient in the Mantra Sastra. He has also written a valuable commentary on *Siva Gita*. When the

Acharya had adopted a boy as his successor and named him (25) *Sacchidananda Bharati*, Venkatappa Naik invited both of them to Ikkeri. He listened to the exposition of the *Siva Gita* by the Acharya and was also greatly impressed by a short discourse given by the young Swami. When the Acharya passed away later at Sringeri, the latter was duly installed on the seat in 1623.

Happily for us, there is a detailed Kavya depicting the early life of the new Acharya, his accession to the Sringeri matha and the political troubles caused by rival chiefs for the mastery of Sringeri. However it stops in the middle of a description of the preparations for a war at the gates of Sringeri itself. Further details however are available from the *Guruvamsakavya*.

The Acharya was a native of Madura district and became a very sound Vedic scholar in boyhood. In his 16th year, he went to Sringeri primarily with the object of marrying the daughter of his maternal uncle who lived there. At the instance of the then Acharya, he changed his mind and accepted the nomination as his successor. He built a shrine for Bhavani in the Malahanikaresvara temple and started several festivals there. He himself composed the stanzas and songs to be sung on those occasions. In the midst of the political troubles which beset him, he found time to write a Kavya,

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI



Goddess Bhavani

Ramachandra Mahodaya, and also several stotras, such as the *Meenakshi Satakam*, *Meenakshi Ashtakam*, *Guru Stuti Satakam*, and *Rama Bhujanga*.

It is said that when once Sringeri was in imminent peril, the guardian deities--Hanuman, Bhairava, Durga, and Kali--took up arms and drove away the invading horde in the dead of night. At another time Sri Sarada herself stood sentinel at the gates of the matha. So deep was the efficacy of his prayer and Mantra Japa.

Venkatappa Naik passed away and his grandson Virabhadra Naik was equally devoted to the matha. His successor Sivappa Naik also was much attached and the Acharya visited his capital more than once. Some properties which had been encroached upon were restored to the matha. Sivappa Naik made a grant in 1661 of lands of an annual revenue of over 120 pagodas. With his help, a kind of revenue settlement was also introduced. The Acharya improved the Jagir by planting arecanut gardens and constructing several dams for irrigation.

After the demise of the Acharya in 1663, (26) Narasimha Bharati reigned for about 40 years. He had the same support from king Bhadrappa Naik, his successor Somasekhara Naik, and Rani Chennamamba, all of Bidanoor dynasty.

Sri Abhinava Sacchidananda Bharati

The next Acharya (27) Sacchidananda Bharati also reigned for about 35 years. (28) Abhinava Sacchidananda Bharati who succeeded him visited Bidanoor in 1758 at the request of the King Somasekhara Naik. The king presented lands yielding over 360 pagodas and later on in 1762 exempted from taxation all articles that were taken to Sringeri for the Navaratri festival of Sri Sarada Devi.

The Acharya arranged to proceed on a tour of Ramesvaram in 1759-60. Sri Krishnaraja Wodayar II, the king of Mysore invited him to his capital and commemorated the event by a

THE LATER ACHARYAS

Sarvamanya grant of the village of Belavadi and the 15 hamlets attached to it, yielding in all 1,200 pagodas a year. A few years later the Hindu kingdom of Mysore came under the rule of Nawab Haidar Ali Khan.

There had been constant contact between the Sringeri Jagadgurus and the Mahratta rulers in the north. It is interesting to learn that Peshwa Raghunatha Rao desired to pay his respects to His Holiness and obtain his blessings in person and invited him to Poona. The Nawab provided a suitable escort and paid over Rs. 10,000 for the expenses of the Jagadguru, besides making costly presents and the necessary arrangements for his convenient visit to Poona.

(29) Sri Narasimha Bharati who succeeded Abhinava Sacchidananda Bharati reigned only for three years. He was succeeded by (30) Sacchidananda Bharati. It was during his reign that Tippu Sultan, the son of Hyder Ali, ascended the throne at Mysore, reached the height of his glory, and eventually had his fall at the hands of the British.

Disputation with Acharya

It is said that Purnayya, his famous prime minister, did not realise the true greatness and scholarship of the Acharya. When the Acharya was once at Mysore, Purnayya convened an assembly of eminent Pandits from whom he chose one to hold a disputation with the Acharya.

The Acharya coolly accepted the polite challenge, but insisted that a curtain be hung in front of him as it did not behove the dignity of a Jagadguru to hold direct discussion with anyone. The condition was accepted and the discussion began. It soon reached a very superior level, to the great astonishment of all assembled. As hours passed by, Purnayya thought that he heard inside the curtain the voice of a woman instead of that of the Acharya. Impelled by curiosity, he pushed aside the curtain slightly.

Imagine his surprise when he found Sri Sarada herself there in human form. Imagine his greater surprise when he saw the same figure slowly transform itself into that of the Acharya. He drew the curtain immediately and prostrated himself at the feet of the Acharya with repeated prayers for pardon for presuming to doubt his greatness.

Tippu Sultan's Veneration

The letters written by Tippu Sultan to the matha bear testimony to the great veneration in which the Acharya was thereafter held by him. He repeatedly asked him to offer prayers to God and send his holy blessings for the success of his undertakings.

It is very significant that the Sultan strongly urged the performance of a *Sahasra Chandi* with a view to the extermination of the hostile

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

armies. He paid all the expenses including those of feeding a thousand Brahmins a day for 40 days continuously. In a letter, he gratefully acknowledged that the rite was most effective.

When the Acharya went to meet the Peshwa at Poona, the Sultan invited him to make a visit to his capital, Srirangapatnam, before leaving his state. When the Acharya stayed away at Poona for a long time, the Sultan most eagerly urged his early return to Mysore for "wherever he stayed, there it rained in plenty, the harvest was bountiful, and every prosperity attended the people."

In a letter, he reiterated his conviction that his strength and hope were reared upon "the threefold basis of God's grace, the holy

Jagadguru's blessings, and the prowess of the arms of the realm." He expressed desire to make a pilgrimage to Sringeri at an early date. However it does not appear that his desire was ever carried out.

It is well known that, after the death of Tippu Sultan in 1799, the Hindu dynasty was restored under the regency of Dewan Purnayya, who rendered invaluable help to the matha in its enjoyment of its rights and privileges. After the restoration, the Acharya was again invited to Mysore in 1811-1812 to bless the royal family.

Sri Sacchidananda Bharati occupied the seat till 1814 when he was succeeded by (31) Abhinava Sacchidananda Bharati who reigned for three years.



CHAPTER 11

The Recent Acharyas

Sri Narasimha Bharati VIII



Sri Narasimha Bharati, the 32nd Acharya, as born in 1798. He became a great yogi through intense meditation and perseverance. He spent over 40 years in *Vijaya Yatras*. His own personal wants were very few; but he ensured that those who followed him never felt any of the privations of travel. Even as a boy, he had walked all the way to Kasi to learn the *sastras* from learned Pandits.

After assuming the headship of the matha, the Acharya strenuously applied himself to securing high proficiency in several branches of learning, besides mastering the details of the administration of the matha. In the affairs of the *samsthanam*, he brought order where there was confusion.

Firmness of Character

He conquered hunger and sleep. When he was hardly 50 years of age, he gave up his normal food, and subsisted on a handful of boiled *pagal* (*Momordica charantia*). He spent practically the whole day in meditation and *puja*.

While he was in Bangalore in 1858, Commissioner Bowring, who had heard of the austere and godly life of the Acharya, wished to see for himself the truth of the reports. One day at 1 a.m. he went *incognito* to the Acharya's camp and slightly drew aside the curtain in front of the *puja* hall. Oblivious of what was happening around and with his head bent down, the

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

Acharya was offering flowers to Sri Chandramoulisvara. The Commissioner contemplated on the spectacle with reverence and wonder. His letters to the Acharya are eloquent expressions of his esteem.

The Acharya was proficient in Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, Marathi, and Hindustani, and it is needless to mention his mastery of Sanskrit. This made it easy for disciples from all over India to approach him with their personal problems and receive his guidance.

He possessed an indomitable will. Never aggressive, never impatient, he gently set about working till his purpose was accomplished. From constant meditation on God Narasimha, his temperament assumed a character of sublimity and struck awe and reverence in the minds of those who approached him. His heart, however, was very tender and would easily melt at the sight of distress.

A few instances of the Acharya's trait of firmness and purposefulness may be recalled. In the course of his northern tour, he approached Nagpur. The Bhosle Raja, who had plunged in luxury and idleness, showed disrespect to the matha. Though the Acharya had little regard for personal show and prestige, he could not put up with an affront to the matha he represented. He fixed his camp in Kampti and stayed there for several months at considerable expense to the

matha, awaiting the time when the Raja would show penitence. During this time the Raja met with unexpected troubles, and realising it was all due to his misconduct towards the sage, walked to the Acharya's camp, sought his pardon and escorted him to his capital.

Erring Priests

In 1838 the Acharya went on a tour to Ramesvaram and halted in the third corridor of the great temple of Ramanatha. There are several wells round the inner shrine, chief of which is known as *Koti-tirtha*. A certain class of priests had constituted themselves as custodians of the *Koti-tirtha*, had it under lock and key, and levied a small fee on all who came to bathe in the water of the well.

The Acharya wanted to break the tyrannous custom. He went to another well to the south of the inner shrine, known as *Sarva-tirtha* and concluded his ablutions with the water from this well. He said to the people assembled that henceforth it would be enough for pilgrims to conclude their baths with the water of *Sarva-tirtha*. From this time onwards the *Koti-tirtha* was forsaken by pilgrims and it became filthy and insanitary for want of use.

In 1872 in the course of the second tour in the southern districts the Acharya came to Madura. There the erring priests came to him in a representative body and implored him to forgive them

THE RECENT ACHARYAS

for their insolence.

The Acharya accordingly went to Ramesvaram in 1873, caused the *Koti-tirtha* to be drained and pouring sanctified water into the well from his pitcher declared that the *Koti-tirtha* had now become purified. The crowning act of the pilgrims should be a bath with the water of the well. From that time the *Koti-tirtha* was restored to its original position.

Another instance of a similar nature occurred at Madura. The Acharya with his young disciple was putting up at the *Kalyanamantapa* of the famous temple of Meenakshi. The young disciple wanted one day to enter the innermost shrine and worship the deity. But the officiating priests of the temple hesitated to allow him inside. Thus prevented, the young disciple left the inner shrine.

The Acharya went to the temple one day and ordered two coconuts to be brought. By pronouncing certain *mantras*, he transferred the *Sakti* of the Goddess to the coconuts and declared to the thousands assembled at the spot that he was taking the Goddess to the matha. He said that it would be sufficient for the devotees who came to worship in the temple to offer coconuts, fruits and flowers, and wave the camphor-light at the threshold itself before the altar.

The *bhattars* (priests) were deprived of the

income from the divine service they used to offer on behalf of the visitors. After months of privation and suffering they came to their senses and sought pardon. The Acharya who was sojourning in the district, came once more to Madura at their request and after transferring back the *Sakti*, declared that henceforth people might dedicate their offerings in the customary way.

Krishna Raja Wadeyar III

Maharaja Krishna Raja Wadeyar invited the Acharya to Mysore. The visit took place in 1828, and in honour of the event, the Maharaja made a number of land grants. He issued several orders to exempt articles brought to the matha from taxes and to enforce the disciplinary action taken by the matha against wrong doers. Palace servants also were brought under the jurisdiction of the matha in the matter of *achara vichara*.

He further confirmed the right of the matha to the property of disciples who died without heirs, subject to a limit; and if the value exceeded the limit, the permission of the Government had to be obtained. An order dated 1826 modified the prevailing practice of including fallen women of the families of disciples under the custody of the Government and directed that these unfortunate women should be handed over to the matha to be reclaimed and reformed. This is an event of tremendous social importance.

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

Royal Dynasty of Mysore

There has been from a long time close and cordial relation-ship between the Royal dynasty of Mysore and Swamins of Sringeri. Successive kings of Mysore were privileged to be the disciples of the Sringeri seat of religion and learning. Nearly a century ago His Highness Sri Mummadi Krishnaraja Wadeyar Bahadur accorded a grand reception to Sri Narasimha Bharati Swami of Sringeri Matha and presented to him a valuable crown. He also dedicated a precious ornament (*nagabharana*) to God Chandramoulisvara of Sringeri. He had the good fortune of learning *Shivagita* at the hands of the Swamin who, on account of his spiritual powers, was known as "Ugraswami".

Sri J. Wadeyar, Maharaja of Mysore.

Civil suits, such as those relating to partitions of property among the disciples, were referred to the matha.

Alleging the dubious grounds of misrule against the Maharaja, the Governor-General placed Mysore under the administration of British Commissioners (1831). The Commissioners, however, took a very helpful and sympathetic interest in the affairs of Sringeri. It was declared in 1837-8 that no appeal would lie

to Government against orders passed by the matha, and also decided that revenue returns need not be submitted to Government by the authorities of the *samsthanam*. The matha could freely exercise its time-honoured privileges, such as exemptions from taxes, enforcement of law and order within its limits and the right to inquire into civil suits.

Northern Tour

Soon after Mysore was taken under British administration, the Acharya went on a long tour of pilgrimage to the north. The Collector welcomed the Acharya at Dharwar, and provided with considerable escort during his pilgrimage to Nasik, Dwaraka, Kurukshetra, Kashi, Badarikasrama, Jagannath, etc. The Acharya's progress through the north Indian States was marked by demonstrations of respect and devotion.

When the Acharya returned to Sringeri after his northern tour, he was 60 years old, and it occurred to him that he should nominate his successor and give him suitable training.

At last fixing his mind upon a promising boy, he came to Mysore. The boy, Sivaswami, was admitted into the *sannyasa ashrama* under the name of Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati. The formal installation of the junior Acharya was attended by the Maharaja and the Chief Commissioner.

THE RECENT ACHARYAS

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Political Dept., 23rd January 1868, No. 41

Read the following letter from the Commissioner for the Government of the Territories of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore, to the Chief Secretary to Government of Fort Saint George, dated Bangalore 4th January 1868, No. 5560-34.

I have the honour to state, for the information of His Excellence the Governor in Council, that the Sringeri Guru Narasimha Bharati, with his youthful successor, is about to proceed on a pilgrimage to Rameshwaram and other places in Her Majesty's Territory, with the escort and followers mentioned below:

Three Biradaris of horse, i.e.,

83 Troopers, 10 Daggers

100 Brahmins	25 Pikes
100 Soodras	2 Elephants
2 Palankeens	50 Cows
2 Tonjons	8 Umbrellas
25 Muskets	6 Chamaras
20 Swords	10 Horses

As the Guru is the principal priest in the Mysore Province, and is held in respect by all classes of Hindus, it is requested that the Madras Government will, in accordance with the instructions issued by it in the Political Department, No.44, dated 21st February 1837, on a similar occasion, be good enough to direct all the public authorities of the Districts through which the Guru may pass to render him all necessary aid in his journey.

Second Tour of the South

The Jagadguru and the young Swami then started on another extended tour, which lasted for 12 years. The Mysore, Madras and India governments had made proper arrangements for the reception of the Acharyas and providing escort suitable to their position. In a memorandum Commissioner Bowring desired all officers to afford the Guru all requisite aid and direct their subordinates to receive him with becoming attention.

He further said that "the Guru as the Head of the Smartha Faith has always been treated with *peculiar honours enjoyed by no other spiritual preceptor....* It may be said that *his influence is far greater than that of any Hindu Spiritual Guide in India*, and it is for this reason that he is regarded with such unlimited respect....The Guru Narasimha Bharati is a venerable old man of 72, who has been a great traveller and has a considerable reputation for

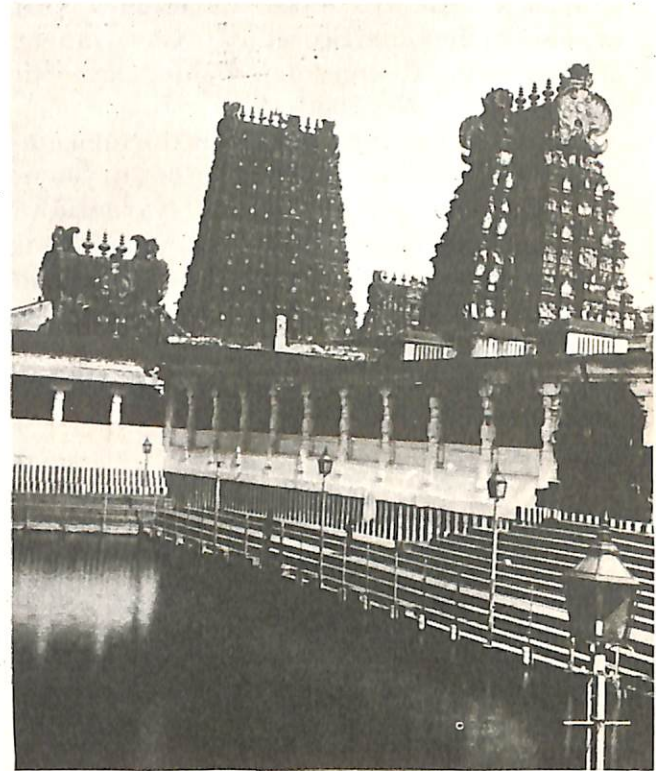
THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

learning. He is deservedly respected, being very unassuming in manner and having a well-established character for benevolence and wisdom."

During these 12 years, the Jagadguru had made all arrangements for the suitable training of his successor. He returned to Sringeri in 1877 and entered *mahasamadhi* in 1879. Before he cast off his mortal body, he had in mind a pilgrimage to the shrine of Sri Mahabalesvara in Gokarna. At the time of his passing away, he was heard to murmur, "Get the palanquin ready so that I may hasten to the feet of Lord Mahabalesvara." A little later he murmured again, "How clever are our bearers; they have taken me to Gokarna and back in such a short time." Mark the coincidence. Just at that hour, the agent of the Sringeri *samsthanam* in Gokarna saw in a dream-vision the Jagadguru entering the shrine and offering worship. Is there anything that a Yogin cannot do, whose mind is one with the Cosmic mind?

The period covered by this chapter witnessed wars, mutinies, the rise and fall of States, depredations and famines. In such a period, Muslim rulers hailed the Sringeri guru as their saviour and guide. Hindu rulers called themselves as the chief disciples and hastened to offer their worship. Indian States and British Provinces supplied biradaries of silledars. All these are certainly a measure of the extraordinary pres-

tige of the Guru which was acknowledged all over India. This is not, however, the whole picture. Millions of humble folk got the opportunity of seeing the great Guru, and felt their lives sanctified.



CHAPTER 12

*Sri Sacchidananda
Sivabhinava
Narasimha Bharati*



During the greater part of the 19th century the matha at Sringeri was presided over by Sri Narasimha Bharati VIII (1817- 1879), the 32nd Acharya. One day, while engaged in contemplation, it appeared to him that a voice arose saying "make room." He interpreted it to mean that he should nominate a successor and bring him up properly. The Acharya sent for several horoscopes and had them scrutinized. The search for a suitable nominee took eight years. At last he found a horoscope to his satisfaction.

The boy Sivaswami, son of Kunigal Ram Sastri, the Court Pandit of Mysore, was nine years old at this time. He was being brought up and educated by his elder brother Lakshmi Narasimha Sastri. Accompanied by his young brother, he came to pay his respects to the Acharya, who seated the boy by his side and asked him what he wanted to do in life. The boy quoted a Sanskrit verse.

This was a prayer to Siva, appropriate to the occasion and in harmony with the Upanishadic doctrine that the guru was God himself in human form. The boy wanted nothing but steadfast devotion to the guru. This prompt reply greatly pleased the Acharya. He had repeatedly prayed to God for a worthy disciple and he now thought that his prayer had been heard.

An auspicious day was selected for the *sannyasa grahana* of the boy. The ceremonials con-

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

nected with it were duly performed, the Acharya as the guru initiating the boy. The rites were exacting and took up the whole day. The guru taught him the *Mahavakya* and named him Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati.

At dark, the guru put him through the evening rites, made him have a light meal and ordered him to lie down beside him on a deer-skin and take rest after the fatigues of the day. The boy soon fell asleep and was heard to murmur in his sleep-- *sarvoham, sarvoham*, "I am all, I am all."

The guru now wished that the young Swami should get accustomed to the tradition of the matha and the responsibilities of touring. For constant touring throughout the extensive jurisdiction of the matha was required for teaching people *Vaidika dharma* as laid down in the scriptures and imparting the higher Upanishadic *vidya* to such as were competent.

The guru was now 82 and nearing his end. In 1879 his soul left for eternal bliss. The young Swami Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati was duly installed as the new Acharya. He keenly felt the separation of his guru. For six years from this time he stayed at Sringeri daily visiting and worshipping at the *samadhi* of his late master, in the midst of his heavy duties, and receiving inspiration from communion with him.

Early Ministry

He now thought it time to go out on the mission for which the matha had been established, one which the older Acharya had instilled into his heart both by precept and example. A Jaghirdar from northern India came to pay his homage to the Swami. It was he who had provided the tower of the Vidya Sankara shrine in the matha with five gold pinnacles. He now requested the Swami to visit north India, offering to accompany him and look to all the camp requirements. This tour lasted four years.

For two years after this tour the Swami stayed at Sringeri, studying the sacred scriptures and teaching the disciples who came to him for instruction in the Vedanta. He then left for a tour of the southern districts.

The practice in the southern districts was to conduct the consecration and the daily service in the shrines in accordance with *agama*, and not *vaidika*, methods. The Swami wished to make a departure from this practice and had the consecration performed according to *vaidika* prescriptions (Vide *Baudhayana Grihya-sutra* for the details of *vaidika pratishtha*). He arranged that worship in the shrines should be performed in the *vaidika* style.

The southern tour lasted for over four years from 1891 to 1895. In the course of this tour, a great many had received *upadesa* from him. His

SRI SACCHIDANANDA SIVABHINAVA NARASIMHA BHARATI

very presence was an education. In the words of the editor of the Swami's work *Bhakti-sudha-tarangini*, "No one was ushered into his holy presence who did not go back full of noble resolve to lead thenceforward a purer and more exalted life. To see him was a privilege; to speak to him was a real blessing. His wonderful personality had magnetic force." His learning was colossal; he was simple as a child. The *Ramayana* was his favourite poem which he was never tired of reading. He had unshaken faith in the efficacy of sincere prayer.

He started a *pathasala* named Sadvidya-Sanjivini at Sringeri in 1895 for the resuscitation of Sanskrit studies. He resolved to spend his time in study and teaching. During the first three years after his return he took advanced students through a complete course of *prasthanatraya* and Sankara's *bhashyas*.



Turn of Mind

A portion of the forest to the south of the Tunga river in Sringeri had been cleared for *tapas* and was named Narasimhavana in memories of his guru. He moved to a temporary shed on an auspicious day in 1897. A portion of the forest, required for more permanent accommodation, was cleared and a few hermitages were constructed on the spot to suit his simple needs.

Great princes and wealthy noblemen used to come to the Swami, with large sums of money for the matha, which they respectfully laid at his feet. Poor people came to him in great numbers for help. People who were suffering from maladies sought his aid. Scholars came to display their learning and get rewards.

He received everyone with a smile and kindness, showed equal solicitude for the rich and the relief of the distressed. For little children, especially, he had a more than ordinary fondness. When great scholars, *yogis* and *jnanis* came, he could talk with them on the most abstruse questions of philosophy with an ease and flow that were marvelous.

For 12 years from 1895 to 1907 the Swami lived at Sringeri, all the while thinking of what should be done to check the drifting away of the people of the land from their old moorings. The Swami sought the help of Sankara, the great

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

master in prayer. The great master's *murti* in the matha was placed in a conspicuous shrine. He arranged for an annual festival in his honour, commencing on the *sukla pratipad* of the month of *Vaisakha* and ending on the fifth day, the anniversary of the master's birth.



In the mornings, special adoration and *archanas* to the *murti* of the master were held with recitation of his great *bhashyas*. There were lectures by the Swami himself in the evenings in simple, easy style on the teachings of the

master. The programme concluded at night with a procession in the streets of Sringeri with musical recitals of the master's life. This movement has since spread to other parts of the land.

Shrines at Kaladi

The Swami wished to revive the spirit of the great master, Sankara, for righteousness to be re-established in the land. Why not build a shrine at the birthplace of Sankara and place his *murti* there? But the very birthplace had become a dim memory; still it could be identified by the description given of it in Madhava's *Sankara Vijaya*.

The Swami knew that nothing great was achieved without difficulties. He simply bided his time. Just at this juncture came the Act of the Governor-General of India for the preservation of antiquities and conservation of ancient

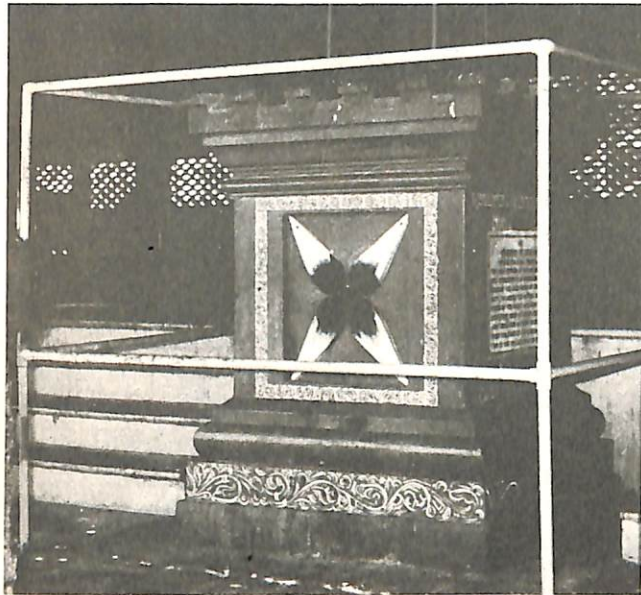


SRI SACCHIDANANDA SIVABHINAVA NARASIMHA BHARATI

monuments. Similar enactments came into force in the Indian states and it was now easy for the Maharaja of Travancore to acquire all the lands known as the Kaladi Samketa and place it at the disposal of the Sringeri matha. The Swami saw that the times were propitious for carrying out his long cherished object, ordered that preparations might be speedily made for a tour to Kaladi.

A day in February 1910 was fixed for the consecration of the shrines at Kaladi. Two

shrines of compact, strong and beautiful design were constructed. One for Saradamba was built near the spot which, according to local tradition, was the place where the great master Sankara's mother had been cremated. Another was built for Sankara, a little further to the west. The river Purna was steep at the place and so a spacious flight of steps, 32 in number, made of granite slabs, was put up. To the east of these shrines a matha was built for the residence of the Swami.



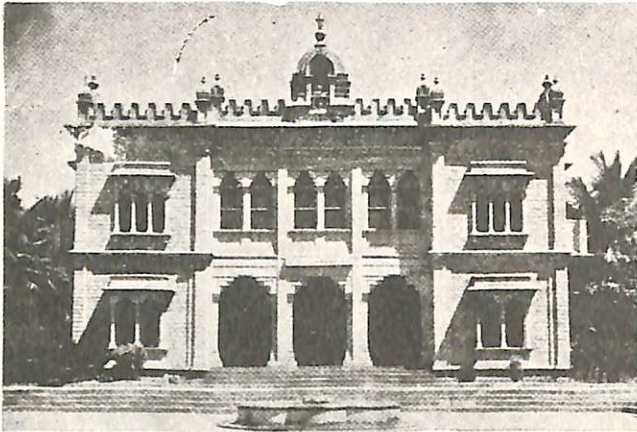
Samadhi of Sankara's mother

The preliminary ceremonies including the sanctification of the *murtis* were performed in regular course, as laid down in the *sastras*. The *murtis* were installed on the date originally fixed. The Swami then came to the shrines and by his own magnetic vibrations quickened the *murtis* with 64 essences, which constitute their life. The atmosphere of the place breathed peace, fervour and culture.

In due course of time, the Bangalore matha, where Sankara's idol was installed by the Swami himself in 1907, was completed with a grand and imposing structure. The idea in building the matha was to make it the centre of advanced Sanskrit studies and to establish a Sanskrit College under the title of *Bharatiya Girvana Praudha Vidya Abhivardhani Pathasala*. Provision was made for free board-

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

ing and education of advanced students in the *Purva* and *Uttara Mimamsas*.



Pathasala in Bangalore

The Closing Days

One thing remained to be done; a successor to the Sringeri matha had to be appointed before the Swami could quit the world. For several years past he had his eye on a promising youth of Sringeri. The sole surviving son out of 13 children of his parents, the boy was very intelligent and well-behaved. The boy was admitted to the Sanskrit School at Sringeri, which was maintained by the matha. His name was Narasimha. The Swami now sent the youth to the matha College at Bangalore to study *Purva Mimamsa*, as a preliminary to the study of the *Vedanta*.

In March 1912 his soul left the body. He had given orders while living that his body should be interred in his favourite retreat, Narasimhavana, and that the Narmada *linga* which he had been worshipping every day before he retired for the night should be installed over the spot. This was accordingly done.

Literary Contributions

His Holiness Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati was not only a realised soul and a highly venerated saint, but also a profound scholar who took a keen interest in scholastic debates, philosophic exposition and devotional writing. A sufficient number of his devotional compositions were collected together and published in 1913 under the title, *Bhakti-sudhatarangini*.

Of all hymns, he wrote the greatest and the most moving on Goddess Sarada, Acharya Sankara and his own guru, Sri Narasimha Bharati. In these hymns he appears to be writing not on absent entities but actually addressing living persons.

It was also due to him that the collected works of Adi Sankara were published under the title, *Sankara Granthavali*.

He is famed as a reincarnation of Adi Sankara who established Sanatana Dharma in the land, and initiated works designed to spread the Dharma.

CHAPTER 13

Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati



A *jivanamukta* is rare. Some time, in some country a great soul takes birth. One must be fortunate even to get a glimpse of such a being, for it ennobles his life. To this *parampara* (tradition) of *jivanamuktas* belonged Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati, the 34th Acharya of Sringeri Sarada Pitha (1912-1954).

The birth of the Acharya was a special event. Though his parents had many children, none survived. He was born after his parents sought the blessings of the Lord at Gokarana, and was named Narasimha. Right from childhood his devotion and concentration in his studies surprised everyone. With the blessings of his guru Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati, he had a double promotion in studies.

Even in childhood his mind was always turned inward. When he was asked to buy grocery from shops, he would go on reciting *Muka Panchasati*. Immersed in *atma dhyana* he would walk ahead, beyond the shop, sometimes even beyond city limits, and had to trace his way back realising his mistake. On a *pradosha* day (day of Siva) he would sit near a pillar in Vidya Sankara temple and mentally perform Siva *manasa* puja.

Completion of Sloka

His guru was happy to hear about his progress from what others reported to him.

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

Once when his guru had to go on a *yatra*, he gave him part of a sloka and asked him to complete it. (He had earlier given him initiation in *Nilakanta mantra*).

The line was : "There is a *rupa* (form) which seemed asleep as eyes were half shut, but at the same time it seemed to reveal *Atma Tattva*." The Guru gave the same *pada* to 10 pandits for completion besides this boy. While the others could not do it, the boy could complete it by dint of devotion.

It is what fills your mind that always finds expression spontaneously. The *sloka* completed by him was built round *Dakshinamurty* which is what his guru had in mind. The sloka described the form of *Dakshinamurty* sitting under the banyan tree in silence showing a *mudra* by hand to teach the great truth to such great sages as *Sanaka*.

This *sloka* hastened his guru's decision to give him *sannyas*. The guru sent him to the matha college in Bangalore, with an advice to acquire *jnana*, not *siddhi*: "Practise *jnana marga* through discrimination. Engage yourself in *vichara* with the utmost faith in the words of the guru and in the *maha vakyas* heard from him. Then think and meditate. The door to liberation will be within your reach."

Activity and Seclusion

After his initiation, the young Swami con-



centrated so hard on his *lakshya* that he soon became a *paramahansa*. Even after coming to head the matha, the Acharya handed over all temporal activities to others and devoted most of his time to self-realisation. In *yatras* too he was detached. Though he had absolutely no worldly attachments, he had great affection for his disciples. Wherever he went he prayed for



H.H. Sri Sacchidanda Bharati



H.H. Sri Narasimha Bharati



A view of the Adhishtanams of Jagadgurus

H.H. Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati, Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati and Sri Sri Abhinava Vidyathirtha



*The murti of H.H. Sri Sacchidananda
Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati*



*The murti of
H.H. Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati*



*The Murthi of
Sri Abhinava Vidyathirtha*



*H.H. Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinaba Narasimha Bharati (1879-1912)
33rd Jagadguru of Sri Sringeri Sarada*



H.H. Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati

Pearls of Wisdom

Seeking spirituality while neglecting one's duties is as futile as sowing seeds without pulling out the weeds, says His Holiness Chandrasekhara Bharati. Read his other sayings:

* The master will never be pleased with the servant who neglects his duties but does *namaskars*. Such a servant will earn only his displeasure. If, therefore, we want really to say of ourselves that we have devotion to the guru, it will not be sufficient if we prostrate before him. Only if we act according to his commands, will we earn his blessings.

* What is it that goes when we leave this body? Wealth and other things remain behind in the house itself. Friends and relatives come as far as the burning ground and return home. Only our good and evil deeds accompany us.

* That alone is called knowledge which makes clear to us the nature of the Self and gets us the everlasting bliss of Freedom. Similarly, that alone is true *karma* which does not lead us to further bondage. All other kinds of *karmas* are a waste of energy.

*Excerpts from "The Call of the Jagadguru,"
by R. Krishnaswamy Aiyer.*

their enlightenment.

The new Acharya gathered round him veteran scholars. One of them Virupaksha Sastri later became head of the Kudli matha. Virupaksha Sastri often proclaimed that the Acharya's profound scholarship was the result of divine grace rather than any effort on his part. Within three years, the Acharya mastered all the recondite works on Vedanta, not to speak of the other *sastras*.

The renovation of the temple of Sri Sarada was completed, and a beautiful shrine was erected over the *samadhi* of the late guru in Narasimhavana. In 1916, the Acharya had the *kumbhabhishekam* of both the shrines performed. The Maharaja of Mysore was present, as also representatives of the Maharaja Gaekwad of Baroda and several other rulers.

Invited by the Maharaja of Mysore, he started in January 1924 on a tour of south India. During this tour, he had arranged to build *pathasalas* for study of Vedas and Vedanta and an *Agrahara* at Kaladi. He acquired the house, in which his guru was born, with the adjoining land at Mysore. He had a magnificent temple erected in which a marble statue of that saint was consecrated by him in the year 1924.

Four years of busy touring was followed by a long period of practical seclusion from the outside world. The Acharya gave himself upto intense *tapasya* oblivious to his surroundings. But

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

Initiation Ceremonies

Kadur, May 25. The religious ceremonies connected with the initiation of the new disciple to Sri Jagādguru Chandrasekhara Bharati Swami, the present head of the ancient and historic Sringeri Pitha, concluded with a procession on Friday evening when the Jagadguru and his new disciple, Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Swami, were taken round in silver and gold palanquins through the principal streets of Sringeri.

Two richly caparisoned elephants led the procession while innumerable disciples, including the palace representative and other Mysore Government officials walked in front. The entire route was gaily decorated. The Swamis were dressed in rich robes of silk brocade and wore crowns set with many precious stones.

Master and Disciple

Yesterday evening there was a great assemblage of pandits which was presided over

by Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Swami while his new disciple Abhinava Vidyatirtha Swami was also present.

The Jagadguru in a short speech explained the true meaning of *guru* and *sisya* (master and disciple). The real guru always looked to the best interests of his disciples and had their well-being at heart. He was a true disciple who placed implicit faith in his guru and conducted himself in such a way as to please him in every respect.

He continued to explain what constituted true happiness.

"That which gives lasting pleasure," he said, "at all times and in all places and conditions is real happiness and the key to secure such happiness is through the worship of the guru with implicit faith in him." The distinguished assemblage broke up after receiving blessings from the Jagadguru.

The Times of India, May 26, 1931

the affairs of the matha required attention. Under inspiration from Sri Sarada, the Acharya designated Srinivasa, as his successor. He was a youth of remarkable intelligence and potential

for spiritual eminence. The Acharya gave him *sannyasa* on May 22, 1931 with the name of Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha. The Junior Swami soon became highly proficient in learning and took

SRI CHANDRASEKHARA BHARATI

*Tributes***A Guide and Seer**

It was a rare opportunity I enjoyed to have been brought into close and reverential contact with Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati.

He possessed a deep knowledge of human nature and proved, as in my case, a counsellor not only in religious matters but in the affairs of the world, too. Though embedded in *Sanatana Dharma* he was able to make allowances for and to comprehend alien systems of life and philosophy. He was tolerant of Western thought.

When I was Dewan of Travancore I invited His Holiness to visit Kaladi, during the Sankara Jayanti celebrations. His visit not only created a remarkable enthusiasm amongst the people but resulted in a complete change of heart on the part of many doubters and sceptics. He lived and taught solely as a Guide and Seer.

Dr. C.P. Ramaswami Iyer.

Atheist Converted

I had no faith in *sannyasis*. Yet on a friend's persuasion, I agreed to accompany him from my holiday camp in Madura to a nearby village where he was going to see the Saint of Sringeri. I put on the best of my European attire and went with him. I was a non-believer.

Then the miracle happened. As Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati was about to enter a room, our eyes met. His look was sufficient. In less than a moment I forgot myself, my pride, and my vanity. Tears trickled down my eyes. Without any prompting I found myself at his lotus feet--not once but several times, sobbing all the while.

That is the story of my conversion to religion from atheism. By the power of his eyes he made a slave of me. His silence is clearly more powerful a language than any spoken word.

M. S. M. Sharma

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

over the spiritual and secular affairs of the matha, giving considerable relief to the senior Acharya.



Seldom did the Acharya receive disciples while in retirement. On the few occasions that he did, for which hundreds would be waiting, a smile or a significant nod proved more efficacious and illuminating than a sermon. It would

fill their souls with blessedness. By dint of introspection and *tapasya*, his consciousness appeared sublimated into an all-radiating spirit.

In 1938, the Acharya yielded to the prayers of disciples to visit Bangalore and stay there for a few months. Facing the shrine of Sankara another shrine had been built for Sri Sarada in Shankara matha. It was consecrated by the Acharya. From Bangalore he went to Coimbatore and thence to Kaladi.

Silent Blessings

The Acharya returned to Sringeri in 1940 and again went into retirement in the Narasimhavana. Though he was not accessible, thousands who prayed for his blessings in their troubles got relief. Many others were blessed even without any conscious attempt on their part to solicit his grace. Here is a thought provoking incident. The Acharya was rarely interested in the news of the world and never read a newspaper. In his retreat none but his close attendants approached him.

Suddenly one day in December 1950, he penned a letter of benediction to King Tribhuvan of Nepal, who had then fled his native soil and come to India. The great powers were none too friendly, and considered that he had abdicated. The letter of the Acharya held out the assurance that the king's troubles would disappear in the space of three weeks, and that by the grace of Sri

SRI CHANDRASEKHARA BHARATI



Pasupatinath and Sri Sarada he would regain his throne.

King Tribhuvan obtained the throne, and the event opened a new and bright chapter in the history of Nepal. Countless others of various stations in life have similarly been blessed. This incident illustrates the universality of his mind in moods of introspection, and how compassion moved him to send a warning and blessing.

When numerous disciples approached the Acharya for permission to celebrate the 60th anniversary of his birth which fell in October 1952, he sternly discouraged the idea. When it was suggested that the funds collected would be spent in performing *Atirudra* and *Sahasra*

Chandi homas, he approved. The *homas* were conducted in April 1953. A large concourse of people from distant places gathered to witness this unique function and to get blessings of the Acharya.



with President Rajendra Prasad, August 24, 1954.



THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

The Acharya came out of his retirement for few weeks after the *homas* had concluded, resumed his normal routine and received disciples. On August 24, 1954, President Rajendra Prasad paid a visit to Sringeri and was received by both the Senior and Junior Swamis with whom he spent some hours in intimate and soulful conversation. The Rashtrapati's innate humility, piety, godliness, and respect for saints much pleased the two gurus, who showered their blessings on him.

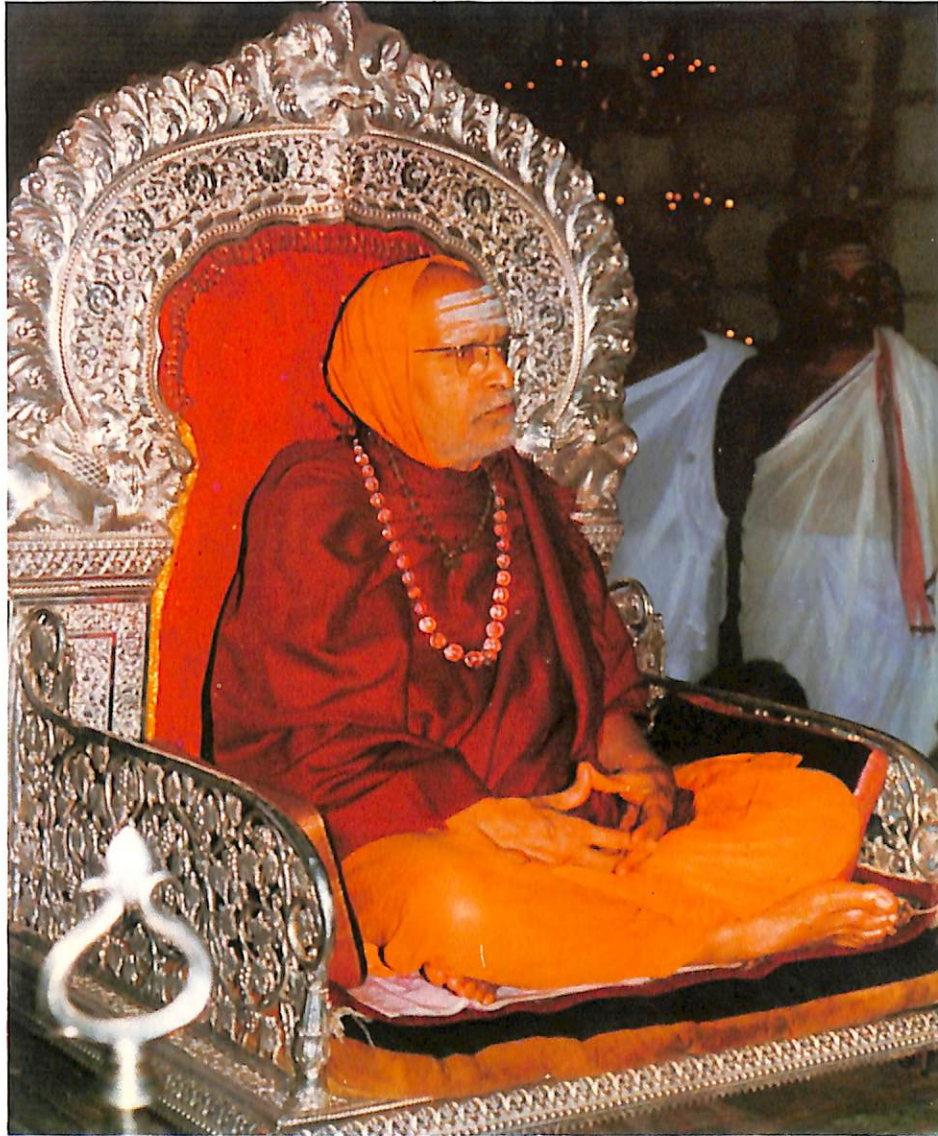
Videhamukti

A few weeks later, the Acharya of his own volition decided to free himself from the fetters of the mortal body. On September 26, 1954, he got up very early in the morning and walked towards the Tunga river. He stepped into the water, and advancing further into the current had a dip. Then he did *pranayama*, and dipped again. The Acharya's body was seen floating down the current.

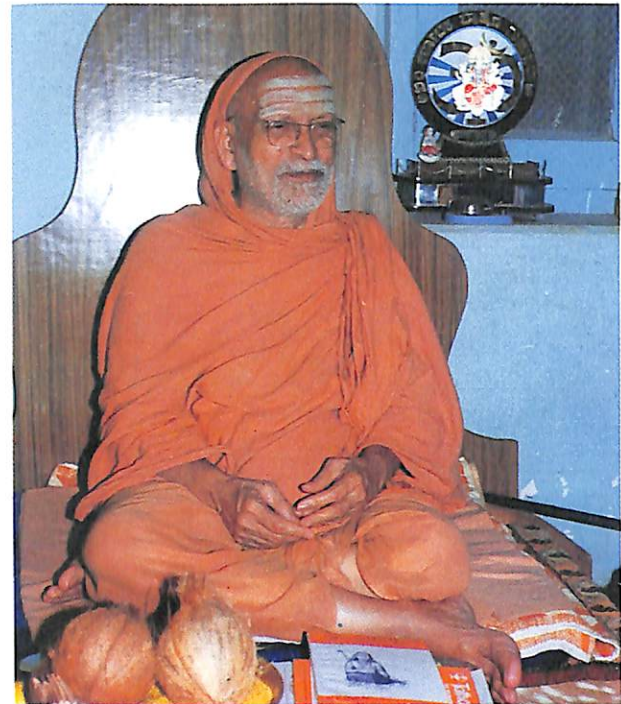
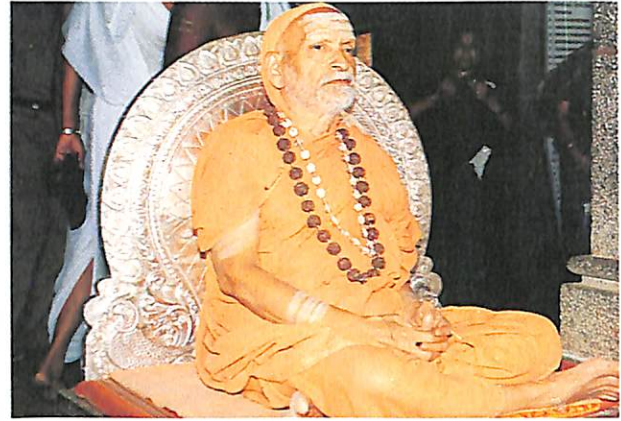
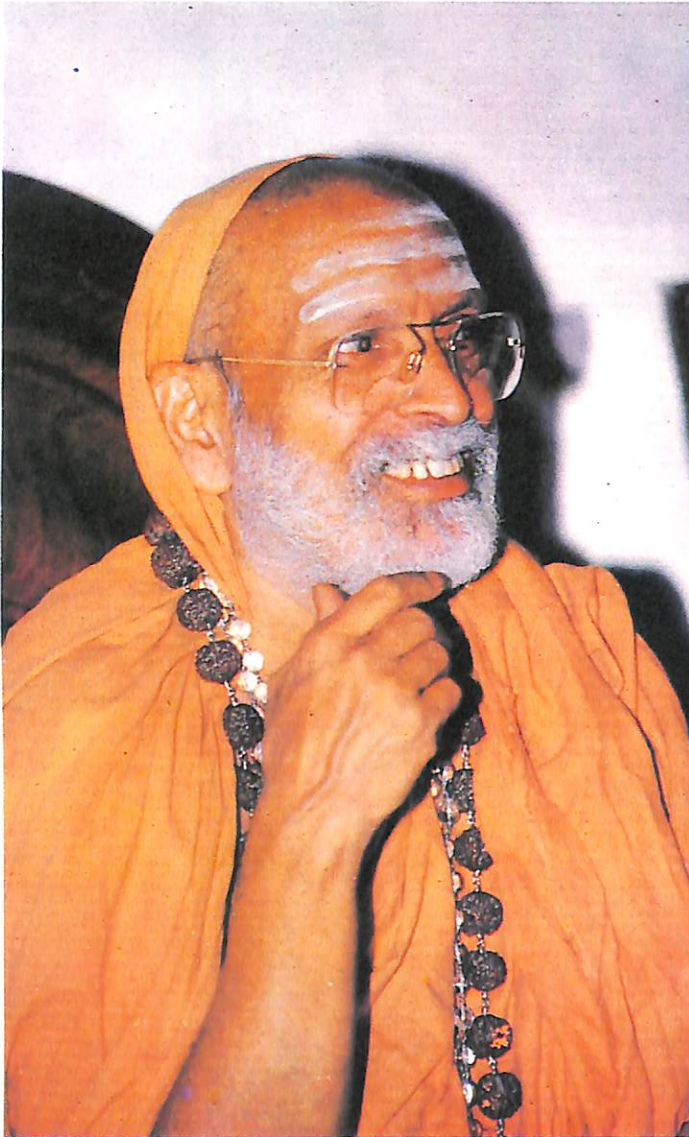
It was reported that the Acharya's body was in the erect sitting posture with legs crossed as at the time of contemplation and was straightened out only in an attempt to restore respiration.' There was no sign of drowning or of suffocation or struggle for life. The Acharya had ever been in the best of health, and his passing away naturally baffled all doctors, just



as he was baffling them even when he was alive. He was an enigma equally in death as in life to all who sought physical explanation for spiritual experiences.



*H. H. Sri Abhinava Vidya Tirtha (1954-1989),
35th Jagadguru of Sri Sringeri Sarada Pitha*



CHAPTER 14

Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha



Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamigal, the 35th Jagadguru of the Sringeri Sarada Pitha, was a perfect embodiment of virtues: compassion, truthfulness, patience, fortitude and righteousness. He worked ceaselessly for years-- with inspired vision and strength and an immense capacity to elevate people.

Born to a primary school teacher, Rama Shastry, on November 13, 1917, the day of Deepavali at Bangalore, he was called Srinivasa. Since childhood he was an ardently pious person. At school, Srinivasa was an obedient and conscientious student. Several were the instances of his boyhood days when he displayed exceptional qualities of wisdom and farsightedness. From a very young age, he began expressing to his friends a desire to renounce the world and attempt to see God.

Meanwhile, Srinivasa's parents were stricken with poverty and were at their wits' end trying to find a way to feed the family and perform his *upanayanam* (sacred thread ceremony). Good fortune knocked on their door in the form of an invitation from the Sringeri Matha to perform Srinivasa's *upanayanam* at the Matha's expense at the Saradamba temple in Sringeri. Ordained by the *Gayatri Upadesa*, Srinivasa stepped into the state of *brahmachari*, after which he sought to stay back and learn the holy scriptures at the matha.

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

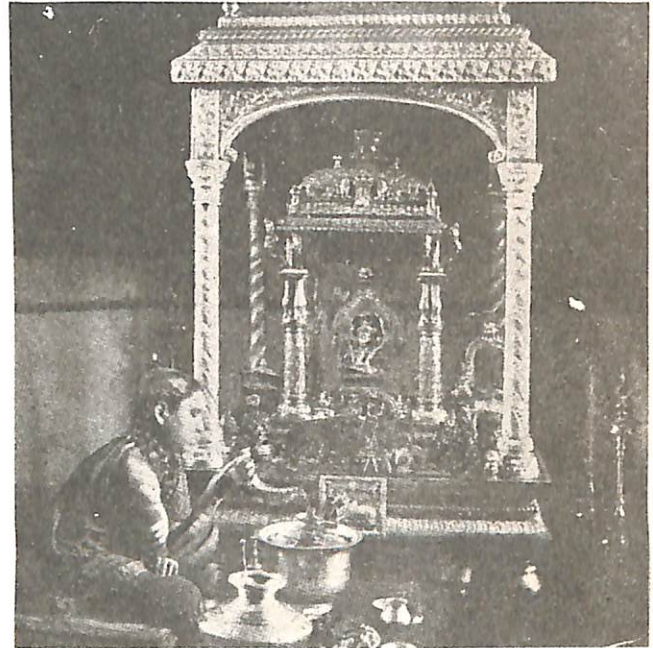


Chosen Successor

Srinivasa was unquestionably the most brilliant of the students at the matha and came up with thought-provoking interpretations of the Sanskrit verses that he was taught. He slowly caught the eye of the Jagadguru, the great *Jivanmukta*, Sri Chandrasekara Bharati Mahaswamigal.

When the Jagadguru decided to choose his successor, the choice rightly fell on Srinivasa. Necessary arrangements were made. On May 22, 1931, Srinivasa was initiated into the holy order of *sannyasa*, even before he had attained the age of 14. The Guru named him as Abhinava Vidyatirtha and taught the sacred *Mahavakyas* that signify the identity of the individual soul with the ultimate reality.

Probably sensing the capability of his disciple, the Jagadguru wished to be relieved of his



SRI ABHINAVA VIDYATIRTHA

responsibilities and pontifical duties. He handed over the running of the matha to his disciple and entrusted the performance of the *Chandramouleeswara Puja*. He also authorised the young Swami to take decisions on the matha's affairs.

Ever since he was initiated into *sannyasa*, Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha was extremely keen on being an ideal ascetic. Mere reading of the scriptural texts could never satisfy his need for perfection. Therefore, he began learning *yoga*.

Strange as it may seem, his formal lessons in *Vedanta* commenced much after he had attained perfection in *yoga*. His guru expounded the *Bhagavad Gita Bhashyam*, *Brahma Sutra Bhashyam* and *Bhashyam on Isa, Kena, Katha* and *Taittiriya Upanishads*. To the Acharya, these lessons merely served to confirm what he had already learnt through his personal experiences earlier in life.

On September 26, 1954, Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati ended his mortal life in the waters of Tunga. About 20 days later, on October 16, Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha formally took over as the 35th Jagadguru Sankaracharya of the Sringeri Sarada Pitha.

Able Administrator

Many were the tasks that lay ahead of the new Jagadguru. As his guru had often remained secluded, he had not toured much. Naturally,



devotees all over the country were eagerly awaiting the visit of the Acharya to their cities. There were other administrative problems of the matha that needed to be sorted out immediately by the new Jagadguru.

He started improving the affairs of the matha, built a new guest house, renovated the Ambal and Ganapati shrines, converted a huge bamboo forest into cultivable land, laid roads of access in Sringeri and introduced irrigation facilities.

He also started a girls' school at Sringeri, established branch mathas at various places and consecrated many temples. He became a very able administrator.

The Acharya was also blessed with incredible memory. When questioned about the accuracy of his recollections relating to numerous

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI



A Unique Summit

An epoch-making event took place in Sringeri, on Sankara Jayanti Day, May 1, 1979. The principal four Sankaracharyas of Jyotirmath, Sringeri, Puri and Dwaraka met at Sringeri that day.

A congregation, comprising thousands of people from all regions of India, belonging to different schools of Advaita, had assembled there. It was, moreover, an event of national importance, as also of international significance.

The Jagadgurus gave *darsan* to the huge gathering near the sanctum sanctorum of Adi Sankara shrine. There was a near

stampede and the entire gathering greeted lustily the Jagadgurus.

A Joint Declaration

The Jagadgurus proclaimed a joint declaration: Blessing the world; setting out the life and times of Adi Sankara; extolling mankind not to swerve from Dharma; advising them to render service to the needy and poor; alleviating the suffering of the helpless or sickly regardless of caste, creed or community, particularly in rural and remote areas of the country; and observing *Swadharma* with devotion to duty and God.

details, he said: "I used to remember details of the construction work that was carried out in my presence. In fact, I could even recall the exact number of nails used for a particular task as also the number of strokes with which each nail was driven in, provided the task was carried out in my presence."

In April 1964, the Acharya started from Sringeri on his first all-India tour during which he met the Sankaracharya of Dwaraka. The meeting of the two Jagadgurus was a great event and was hailed by the press and the public alike.

Fifteen years later, during the Jayanti of Sankara Bhagavatpada in May 1979, the Acharya organised a historic summit meeting at Sringeri with the Jagadguru Sankaracharyas of the three other mathas of Dwaraka, Badri and Puri, established by Adi Sankara, thus showing the unity of spiritual strength of the religious leaders.

In the administration of the matha and its affairs, in strengthening the bonds between the devotees and the matha, in establishing branches, in the propagation of Vedas and *sastras*, and, in short, in all activities that were beneficial to the people at large, his contribution was remarkably significant. There was no matter connected with the matha in which he had not played an effective role.

Extensive Tours

It is true that right from the beginning the Acharyas of Sringeri Sri Sarada Pitham have undertaken tours to bless the devotees. But it is difficult to find a personality like Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha in the annals of the matha who had so extensively and repeatedly travelled from Kanyakumari to Kashmir.

Not only that, he is the only *amnaya pithadhipati* after Adi Sankara to have visited Nepal. Maha Sivaratri was celebrated by him at Nepal in 1967. That too was on the earnest and devout request made by the then king of Nepal. Out of gratitude for the special blessings received by his father, King Tribhuvan, from Sri



H. H. conversing with the King of Nepal.

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

Chandrasekhara Bharati, king Mahendra of Nepal extended a reverential invitation to the Acharya.

Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha started on his first tour in 1956 and covered the four southern states of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, for a period of six years. Again starting from Sringeri in June 1964, he covered southern and northern India continuously for four years. This was his second major tour.

In many parts of the country, he established branches. In many places, he consecrated the idols of Sri Saradamba and Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada. He established *pathashalas* and initiated activities for *Dharmic* awareness. For propagation of Vedas, the Acharya added a Veda *Pathashala* to the existing one at Bangalore. Tremendous developments took place in the 100-year old *pathashala* at Sringeri. Similarly, for the propagation of Sanskrit, he established 'Surasaraswati Sabha' which is conducting examinations for a large number of students twice a year.

The finances of the matha were not in good shape when he became the Acharya. Added to it, the Inam abolition and land reforms brought fresh problems. But he faced the problems bravely and put the matha on a strong footing by efficient management of the affairs.

Constructive Work.

He gave a face lift to the matha premises in Sringeri and also provided facilities to the pilgrims who were coming to Sringeri in large numbers throughout the year. The bridge over the Tunga river, called Vidya Tirtha Sethu, stands as a living monument to his memory, for it owes its construction entirely to him.

He renovated the Malahanikaeswara Temple,



Sri Malahanikaeswara Temple

SRI ABHINAVA VIDYATIRTHA



the Sureswaracharya *samadhi*, the Sankara Sannidhi, the *pathasala* and *yagasalas*. He shifted the Rama and Brahma temples to the front of the Sarada temple, and in their place built the Shankara Krupa Guest House. He constructed the Subrahmanya temple, Sakti Ganapati temple and the Pravachana Mandira and paved the entire premises with stones. He also built a hospital with 100 beds at Sringeri

and brought out many publications of the matha.

Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamigal was a great scholar; people from all over India came to him for *darsan* and guidance. It is no exaggeration to say that he brought to the Sarada matha all its ancient eminence and glory. He attained *videha mukti* in September 1989.

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

H. H. Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha with



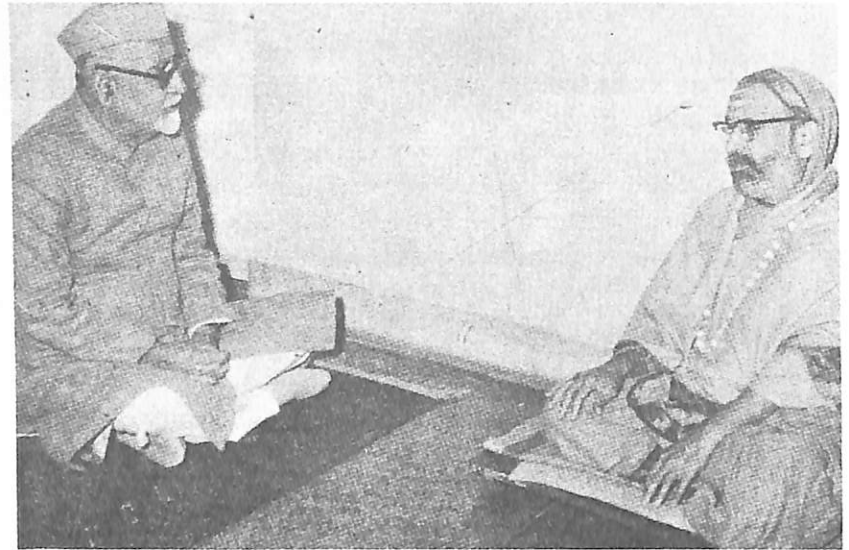
former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.



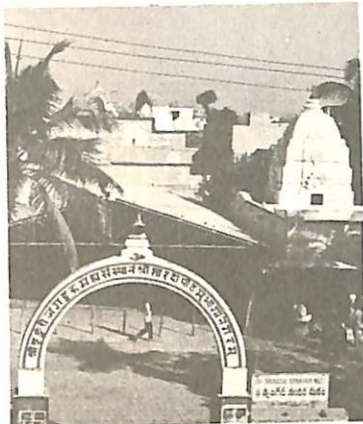
Maharaja of Mysore Sri Jayachamaraja Wodeyar



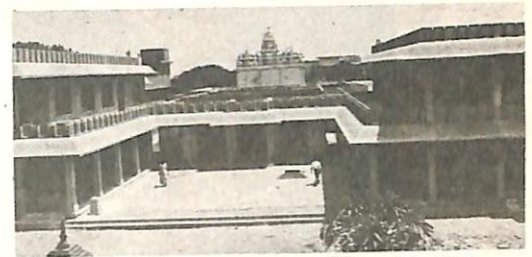
Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, former President of India.



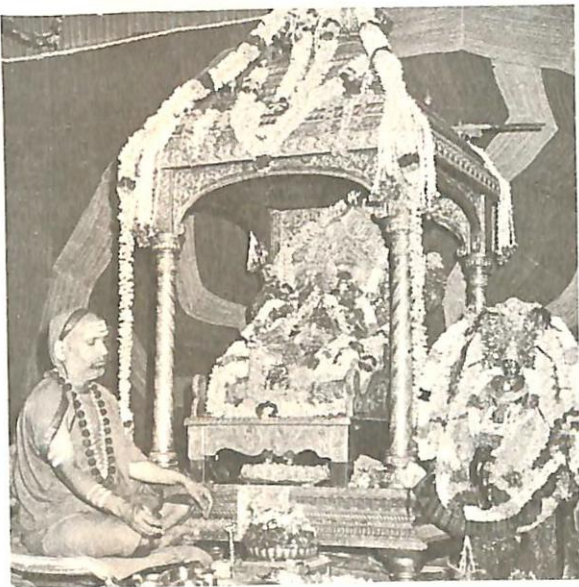
former President Zakir Hussain.



Sankar Matha at Hyderabad



Sankara Matha at New Delhi.



Coronation of, Dwaraka Sankaracharya



Tributes to Guru

H. H. Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamigal

Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswami who was the 35th Acharya of Dakshinamnaya Sringeri Sri Sarada Peetham for 35 years, shone as a great *jnani* and yogi.

Notwithstanding his extraordinary knowledge and proficiency in Sastras, he was not merely able to talk freely with the common man but also convey to him lucidly the import of *tattvas* or truth.

Throughout his life he adopted the principle that before preaching to anyone he should practise the precept himself. It was his settled conviction that wherever anything good happened, it should be recognised and given due credit.

He was a great pandit among pandits; a great yogi among yogis; a great *jnani* among *jnanis*. There is no doubt at all that Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha was a *mahapurusha* of recent times. Just by remembering the great saint, we will be able to get rid of all sins, and all prosperity and welfare will come to us.

Purpose of Life

He was overflowing with compassion towards everyone. He considered that life

was meant for *paropakara*. Normally a person would react if someone behaves in an improper manner; and nurturing ill-will, he would wait for an opportunity to wreak vengeance.

But our Acharya was always forgiving and forgetting the misconduct of others, due to his inherent nature of compassion and mercy. He used to tell us always that we must not have a feeling of retaliation. He said: "It is the nature of one possessed with rajasa disposition. We the *sannyasis* should be of *sattvika* disposition always."

Great Affection

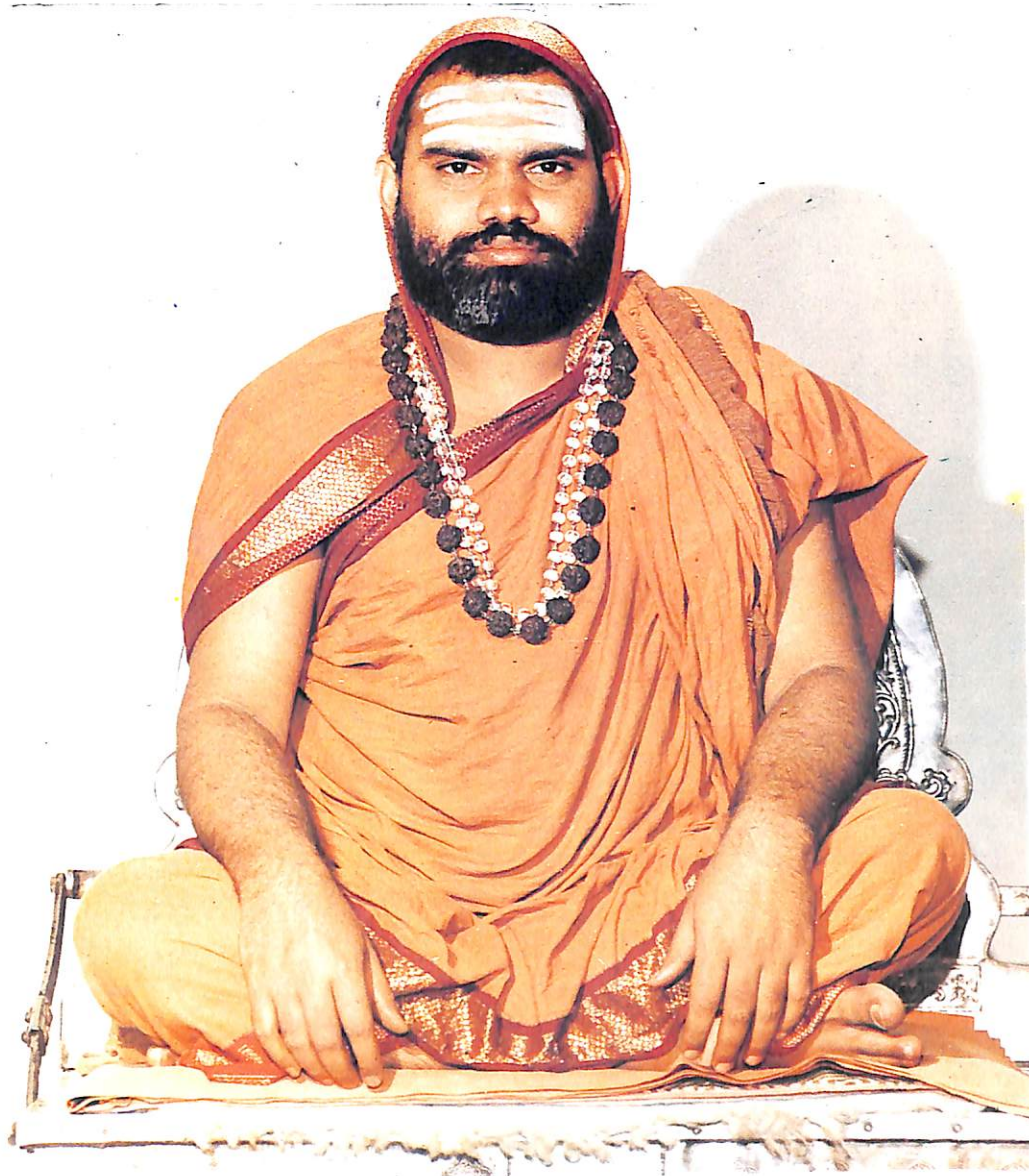
He had extraordinary affection towards me. I came to know that from his own expressions. On a Pradosha day, in the beginning of my coming to Sringeri, I had been to the other side of the river. That night while sitting for puja, he asked if I went to the other side of the river.

"Yes. I went," was my reply.

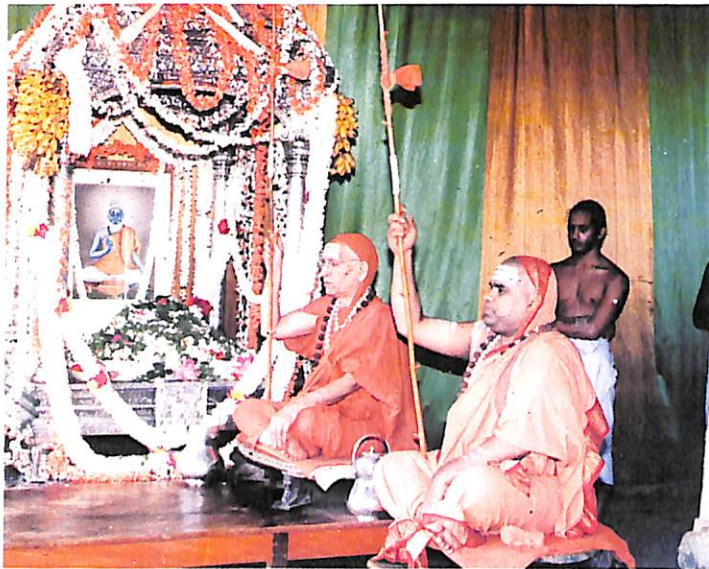
"You stay put in Narasimha Vana itself. Don't go elsewhere. I will be observing you," said my guru. I did not know that he was closely watching my movements. To say that I should always be in Narasimha Vana and that he was observing me intently, denotes the amount of affection he had for me.



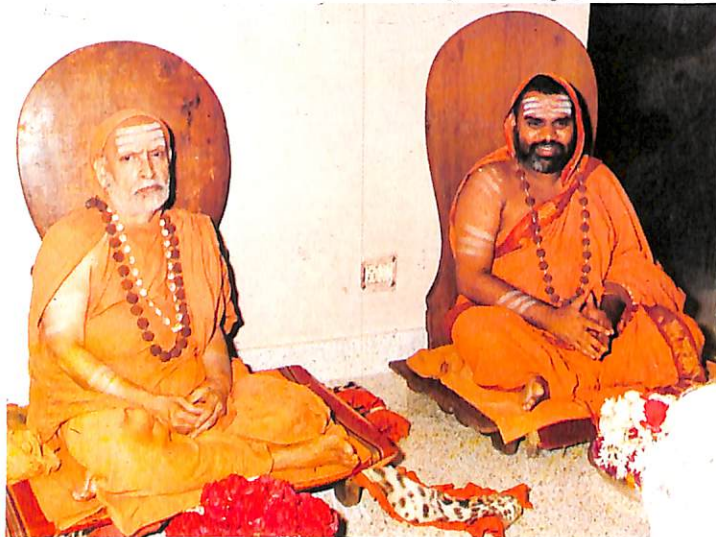




H. H. Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamigal, the present Jagadguru.



Their Holinesses at Vyasa Puja



Their Holinesses in Durbar dress

CHAPTER 15

*The Present Acharya**H. H. Sri Bharati Tirtha*Part I
Inspiring Life

Sri Bharati Tirtha, the present Jagadguru of the Sringeri Pitha, is a *sannyasin* of the highest *paramahansa* order, an eminent scholar of Vedanta and *sastras*, and is also known as a good samaritan.

He came to the Sringeri Acharya Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha as a bachelor at the age of 15 seeking his blessings and instruction in the *sastras*. The Sringeri Acharya was then observing *chaturmasya* at Ujjain. Sitarama Anjaneyulu (that was the boy's name at birth) had come with great *vairagya* growing in him.

As the great Acharya was returning after bath in the river Sipra, Sitarama Anjaneyulu prostrated before him and sought his tutelage, which was granted. The very next day the Acharya started teaching him. He soon became a gem of a scholar and a dear disciple.

What prompted the boy who had just finished high school studies, and who was advised by his father to go for higher education, to leave his home? Why did he go all the way to Ujjain from his home in Narasaraopet in Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh? It must have been predetermined so by Goddess Saradamba, the presiding deity of Sringeri matha.

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI

When the same question was put to *brahmachari* Sitarama Anjaneyulu, he replied: "I had the good fortune of having the *darsan* of the Jagadguru quite early in life. Once I was asked to talk in Sanskrit by my teacher before His Holiness in Vijayawada. I got a special prize from him. At that time it struck me that His Holiness was my teacher and my saviour. His beaming smile was giving me a message. I thought I got what I wanted.

"His Holiness has since been in my mind always. I used to feel that I was guided by His Holiness whenever there was a problem. This feeling grew in me to such an extent that I could not stay in my place."

Since then Sitarama Anjaneyulu did not leave the lotus feet of the Acharya. He never returned to his village after he became a *brahmachari*. He accompanied the Acharya during all his tours.

Within eight years he finished his study of *Krishna Yajur Veda*, *Purva* and *Uttara Mimamsa*, *Nyaya Sastra* and many other treatises and commentaries. He became a poet in Sanskrit.

Childhood Days

Sitarama Anjaneyulu's childhood is worth recalling in the context of his spiritual background. He was born into a *Smartha* family bearing the name "Tangirala", of *Apasthamba sutra*, *Krishna Yajus sakha*, *Kutsasa gotra*,



Sri Sitarama Anjaneyalu (right) after sacred thread ceremony

living in Alugumallepadu village in Palnadu area of Guntur, on the banks of river Naguleru. He was born April 11, 1951 as a result of long prayer and *vrata* (fast) by his father Venkateswara Avadhani and mother Ananthalakshamma. Avadhani had studied the Vedas though learning English was the current fashion.

The pious couple desired very much to have a

THE PRESENT ACHARYA: H. H. SRI BHARATI TIRTHA

son after begetting four daughters. Avadhani used to wake up early in the morning, bathe in the river and worship Lord Bhavani Sankara, the local deity, with *Rudrabhishekha*. This he did for a year.

He also used to perform Sri Rama *navaratrot-sava*. He took a vow to name his child after Sita and Rama if his wish was fulfilled. The Lords Sankara and Rama were kind to him. He was blessed with a son. The infant was named Sitarama Anjaneyulu.

Sitarama Anjaneyulu has been a great devotee of Lord Siva. Worship of Lord Chandramouliswara has been his keen desire. Even during his boyhood days he used to forget himself worshipping the Lord.

Outside school hours he always devoted his time to Sanskrit studies. By the time he was nine he had considerable command over the language. He was aware of its subtleties. Scholars and poets, including the Kavi Samrat Sri Viswanatha Satyanarayana, praised him for his eloquence. He won a number of prizes and was invited by All India Radio Vijayawada to participate in Sanskrit programmes.

At night he learnt the Vedas from his father. He studied *Samhita*, *Brahmana* and *Aranyaka* so well that he could take part in the Guntur District *Vedapravardhaka Vidwat Pariksha*. He passed the examination with honours.

Command over Languages

Sri Bharati Tirtha was seen more often talking in Sanskrit than in Telugu, his mother tongue. Quite early in life he completed his study of grammar, literature, logic and philosophy. With an inborn love of Sanskrit, he composed poetry at a very early age. Even at games he would talk in verse. Rules of prosody were never violated. Rhyme, rhythm, irony, suggestion: every poetic beauty came naturally to him. Even ordinary things of life found expression in his poetry.

The mastery of His Holiness in Indian languages is well-known to devotees. The Sringeri matha has under its purview Andhra, Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Kerala. People of these areas visit him to pay their respects and are naturally drawn by his amazing versatility in the languages together with a command over the local idiom.

In 1974 on the day on which he was initiated into *Sannyasa*, His Holiness spoke in Kannada for the first time at the felicitation meeting with such a telling eloquence that all those present, including ministers, High Court judges, members of the Legislature and University professors, could not control their admiration while listening to him. The eloquence with which he delivers speeches in

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI



Sishya sweekara at Sringeri.

Telugu, his mother tongue, is indeed a matter of rare experience.

Sri Bharati Tirtha accompanied his Guru in his tour of the northern parts of India, and lectured in Hindi. His benedictory speeches were highly appreciated. Even scholars in Hindi language and literature were fascinated with his melodious Sanskritised Hindi.

Devotion to Guru

Jagadguru Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamigal granted the *sannyasa asrama* to *brahmachari* Sitarama Anjaneyulu in November 1974. Sri Bharati Tirtha was the sanctified name given to the *sannyasin*. The Guru declared that Bharati Tirtha would be his successor.

Sri Bharati Tirtha had unswerving devotion to his guru. He is a shining example--like Sri Padmapadacharya in the path of devotion; like Sri Totakacharya in serving the teacher; like Sri Hastamalakacharya in realising the teachings of the Upanishads. He upholds the tradition of the great pontificate as established by Sri Suresvaracharya in scholarship.



All his speeches in the regional languages have one thing in common. They are built brick by brick on a sound proposition. They are forceful, thought-provoking and inspiring. The language is always within the reach of the listeners. He reminds us of the ancient sages who taught in the *gurukulams*.

At Sringeri, Sri Bharati Tirtha, not merely supervises the schools, but also teaches the senior students. He would personally conduct tests, encourage deserving students, try to help the slow learners and encourage even the teachers through some programmes. The matha has undergone many changes on his initiative. Now one can write to the office in any of the Indian languages, or in English.

Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada in his *Matham-naya Sasana* said that any sage occupying the position of the Jagadguru of Sri Sringeri matha in the unbroken apostolic succession is an incarnation of himself. Sri Bharati Tirtha is a worthy example.

Part II

Spectacular Coronation

Sringeri turned into a city of joy when thousands watched the rare spectacle of the colourful coronation of the 36th Jagadguru of the Sri Sarada Pitha. The mantle fell on His Holiness Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamigal on October 19, 1989 when, true

to the tradition, he took over as the head of the Sringeri Sarada Pitha, the Vedic seat of the south.

Heavenly Spot

The matha was transformed into a heavenly place with lavish floral decorations in the huge *shamiana* erected from inner gate upto Sri Vidya Sankara temple covering the entire open space; and at the entrance and all along the corridors inside Sri Saradamba temple. The spot where *vyakhyana simhasana*, the throne of transcendental wisdom, was placed, attracted the special attention of the decorators.

Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamigal started from Sacchidananda Vilas Ashram building in Narasimhavana, in the forenoon of October 19, followed by *sishtyas* (disciples) making *jaya ghosha* (uproarious greetings). The entire path right from Sacchidananda Vilas up to Sri Vidya Sankara temple on the northern side of river Tunga was carpeted with flowers. His Holiness adorned with silk attire and a silk crown, stepped into Sri Vidya Sankara temple, offered *pranams*, and sought the blessings of the previous Jagadgurus. Next, he entered Sri Saradamba temple through the entrance near Sri Sakti Ganapati and took the blessings of Sri Vighnesvara.

The *asthana* pañdits and the *purohita* (priest) were ready with all *samagriyas* (accessories) for

the coronation, after carrying out the preliminaries with Vedic chants. *Nadaswara* and *clarinet* were on play.

Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamigal reached the spot where all the previous *gurus* had assumed responsibility of the throne. *Puja and arati* to the *simhasana* were performed and His Holiness ascended the throne as the 36th head of the matha amidst Vedic chants by *asthana vidwans* and the playing of *mangala vadyas*.

Special Messages

The matha *purohita* performed the *pattabhisheka* with the holy waters brought from sacred rivers and oceans that were kept consecrated in *kalasas* (vessels) and also with gems, at the auspicious *Dhanur lagna* fixed for the coronation. The *arati* (waving of camphor light) to the Jagadguru was taken.

As per tradition, seated on the golden palanquin, Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji went round Sri Vidyasankara temple and entered it through the northern entrance and offered *pranams*. He then returned to Sri Saradamba temple and resumed his seat on the *simhasana*. Then, the public program commenced.

Special messages from the Prime Minister and the President of India were read and their special offerings were placed at the holy feet of the Jagadguru. The *mathadhipatis*, distin-

guished guests and *sishtyas* were honoured with silk shawls blessed by the Jagadguru.

The Jagadguru proceeded to the temple of Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada and offered obeisance. After *darsan* of Sri Torana Ganapati, the royal robes were removed and His Holiness retired for bath and midday *anushthana*.

Public Function

On the evening of October 19, a special function was held in the big *shamiana* inside the matha complex, to express thanks and offer *pranams* to the Jagadguru who was seated on a tastefully decorated dias, flanked by *mathadhipatis* and *sannyasis*. A large number of *sishtyas* offered *kanike*.

The Jagadguru blessed the audience with a historic *anugraha bhashanam* in Kannada that electrified the entire congregation. The spiritual power behind the words and arguments drove home the reasons for the establishment of *amnaya peethas* by Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada, their functions in furthering *dharma prachara*, the role of Karma in human suffering and enjoyment, and the need to inculcate *bhakti* among the people.

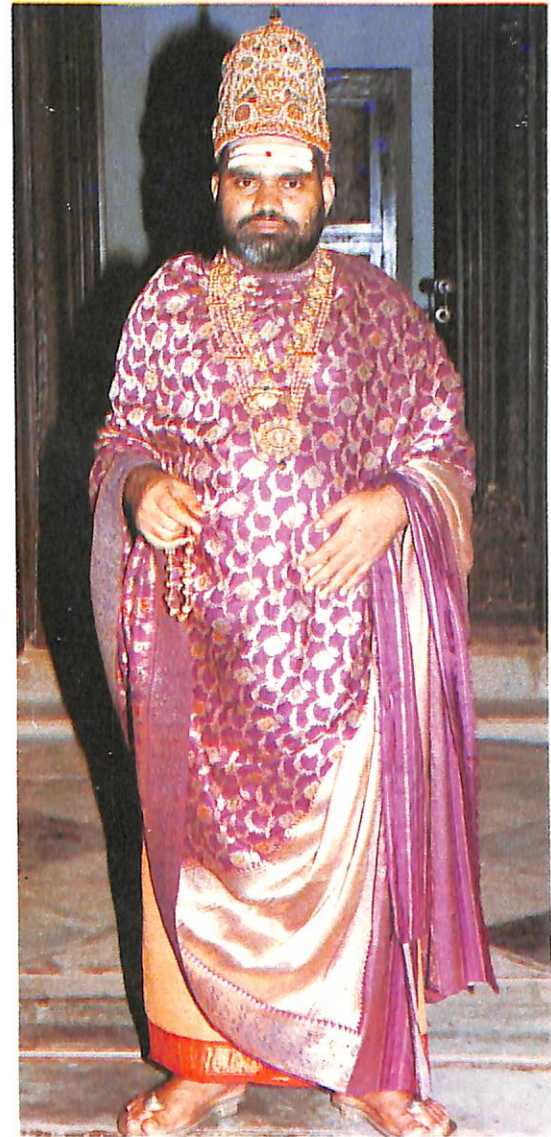
Sringeri town wore a festive look even from the previous day. All shops and houses were decorated and illuminated. Festival shops and vendors filled the sidewalks. On October 19, special arches, festoons, banners and special

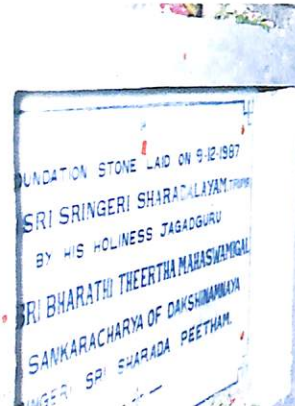


His Holiness taken in procession after coronation.

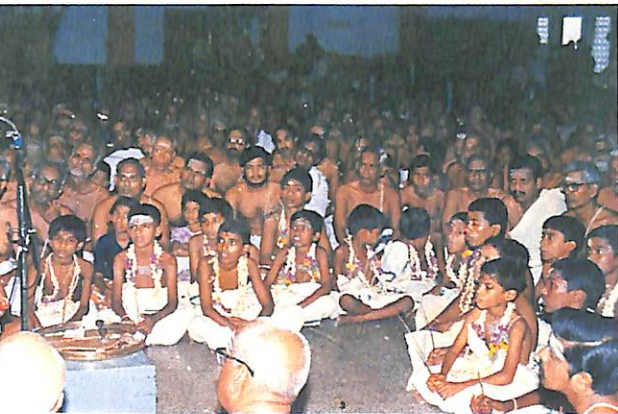
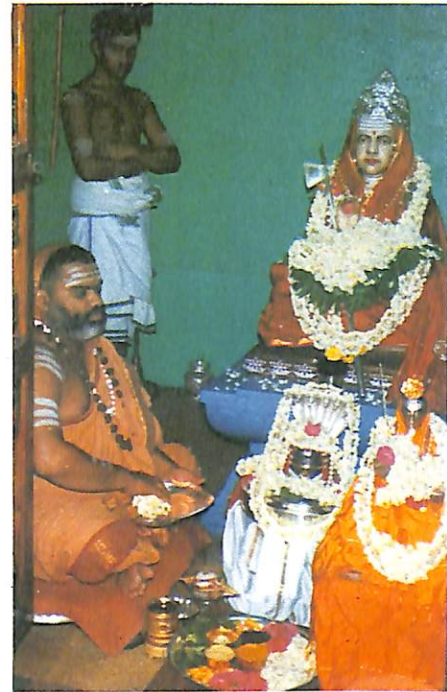


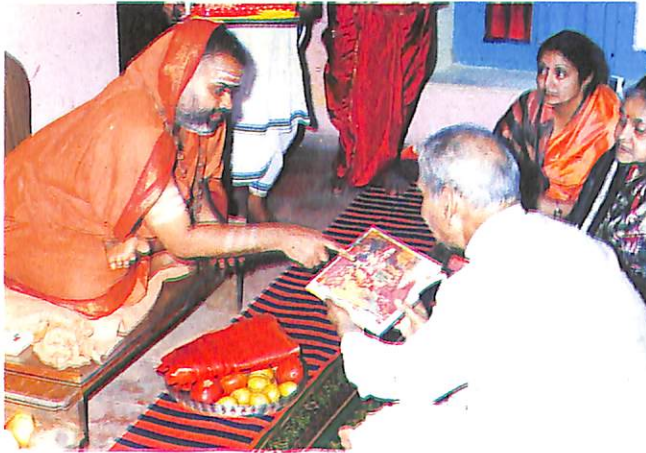
Durbar during Navaratri at Sringeri





Divine Grace





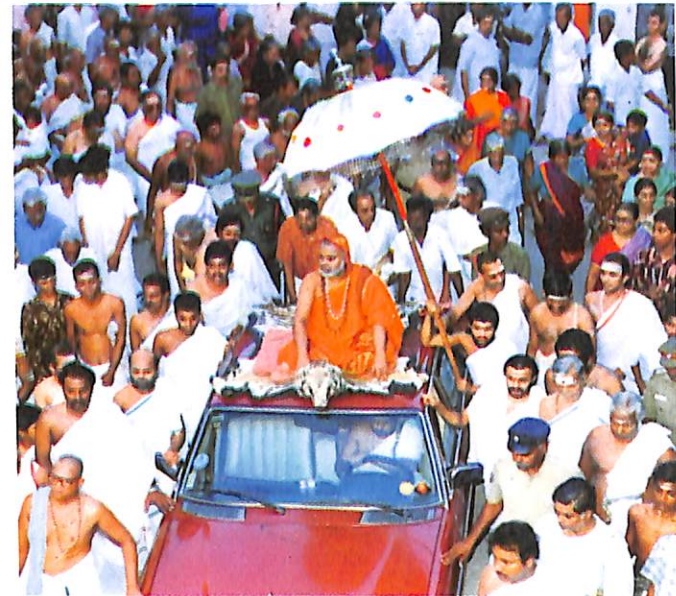
Vice President Shankar Dayal Sharma



H. H. with Rajiv Gandhi



with Swami Swarupananda of Dwaraka Pitha



H. H. in Pune

decorations were erected on the main streets of Sringeri.

The *Addapallakki Utsava* which is a unique privilege of Dakshinamnaya Sringeri Sri Sarada Pitha commenced early that night. It was the biggest and most colourful procession at Sringeri.

Fitting Finale

Seated on the beautifully decorated palanquin, wearing the *durbar* robes and gem-studded crown, rolling the *spatika* rosary in the right hand, with a mild chant of esoteric formulae on the lips, with eyes sometimes beaming at people around and sometimes half-closed in introversion, Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha graced the *addapallaki* and was carried through the main streets of Sringeri.

The *Utsava* ended near the entrance of Sri Saradamba temple. The Jagadguru entered the temple late at night. With an *arati* to *utsava* *vigraha* of Sri Saradamba placed on the small illumined silver *ratham*, the *dindi utsava* commenced. His Holiness backstepped in front of the *ratham* while facing the deity.

After a round through the corridors of Sri Saradamba temple, the Jagadguru sat facing Sri Saradamba on the *simhasana* at the entrance of the temple, when the *mangalarati* was offered to the presiding deity as a fitting finale to the memorable event.

Continuing Splendour

No institution has survived for 12 centuries with such continuous and ever increasing splendour as the Dakshinamnaya Sri Sarada Pitha at Sringeri.

It was here that Adi Shankara installed Sri Saradamba on a Sri Chakra and lived for 12 momentous years to teach his commentaries on scriptures to chosen disciples.

It was here that Sri Suresvaracharya, the doyen of Sankara's Vedantic disciples, took over as Sankara's first successor to carry on his work.

It was here that successive *peethadhipatis*, such as the illustrious Vidyatirtha and Vidyaranya, brought fame and glory to the institution.

It was here that a galaxy of illumined sages and realised souls, such as Sri Sacchidananda Bharati, Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati, Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati and Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha, covered themselves with glory and spread Adi Sankara's ideals far and wide.

It is here, again, that the present Holiness Sri Bharati Tirtha, the 36th Jagadguru in the unbroken lineage, adorns the throne as the living symbol and guides all spiritual seekers. Hail Saradamba! The ever glorious tradition of the hoary institution continues--undimmed by the passage of time.

Coronation Address

Following are excerpts from the speech by His Holiness on his coronation day, October 19, 1989.

Why This Pomp ?

Many people asked me whether a ceremony like the *pattabhishekam* (coronation) to a virakta, to a *Sannyasi*, does not look a bit incongruous. They have pointed to me that it is a ceremony fit to be performed to a person immersed in worldly affairs, whose mind goes out to get satisfaction for the numerous desires. They have asked me how a ceremony like the *pattabhishekam* would go well with a person who should train himself in the qualities opposed to worldly desires.

In fact, in the times of Sankara Bhagavatpada, the Acharya of Sringeri did not possess the royal regalia, or royal insignia, nor had he to undergo a ceremony, such as the *pattabhishekam*. From Sankara Bhagavatpada down to Sri Vidyananya, the Acharyas had devoted themselves only to teach their disciples and guide the seekers of Truth. Sri Vidyananya, the Karnataka Simhasana *Pratishthapanacharya*, was himself a great ascetic.

Hakka and Bukka came in search of Sri Vidyananya. He blessed and helped them and secured for them supremacy over Karnataka by the power of *tapas*, by the power of his intellect, but he continued in his ascetic way of life.

At this time, in order to express their gratitude to the guru, in remembrance of the great help rendered to the cause of Hinduism by Sri Vidyananya, they placed all their royal insignia at his lotus feet. A guru should not hurt the feelings of his *sishtyas*. Sri Vidyananya accepted the royal insignia to satisfy the *sishtyas* and to gladden their hearts.

If we think that Sri Vidyananya hankered after these honours, or desired them, it would be a false notion. The Acharyas of Sringeri who reverently follow the footsteps of Sri Vidyananya have each, in their turn, borne these royal insignia which Sri Vidyananya accepted to propitiate and satisfy Hakka and Bukka.

Therefore, if anybody were to think that these royal ceremonies are an indication of the fascination of the Acharyas for mundane matters, their understanding is wrong. To attribute a sense of infatuation to the Acharyas who are ever devoted to the Advaita doctrine taught by Sankara Bhagavatpada is absurd. But keeping in mind that it is the duty of the guru to make the *sishtyas* happy and also to conform to tradition, we gave our acceptance to this ceremony. There is no other ulterior motive; neither is there expectation of anything.

Sri Jagadguru Parampara -- Sringeri

Divine Group

Lord Sadasiva
Lord Narayana
Lord Brahma

Semi-divine group

Vasishta Maharishi
Sakti Maharishi
Parasara Maharishi
Veda Vyasa
Sri Suka Acharya
Sri Gaudapada Acharya
Sri Govinda Bhagavatpada
Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada

Jagadgurus

Period of Reign

1. Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada	A.D. 820 (videha-mukti)
2. Sri Suresvaracharya	820-834
3. Sri Nityabodaghana	834-848
4. Sri Jnanaghana	848-910
5. Sri Jnanottama	910-954
6. Sri Jnanagiri	954-1038
7. Sri Simhagiri	1038-1098
8. Sri Iswara Tirtha	1098-1146
9. Sri Narasimha Tirtha	1146-1229
10. Sri Vidya Sankara Tirtha	1229-1333
11. Sri Bharatikrishna Tirtha	1333-1380
12. Sri Vidyaranya	1380-1386
13. Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati I	1386-1389

14. Sri Narasimha Bharati I	1389-1408
15. Sri Purushottama Bharati I	1408-1448
16. Sri Sankara Bharati	1448-1455
17. Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati II	1455-1464
18. Sri Narasimha Bharati II	1464-1479
19. Sri Purushottama Bharati II	1479-1517
20. Sri Ramachandra Bharati	1517-1560
21. Sri Narasimha Bharati III	1560-1573
22. Sri Narasimha Bharati IV	1573-1576
23. Sri Narasimha Bharati V	1576-1600
24. Sri Abhinava Narasimha Bharati	1600-1623
25. Sri Sacchidananda Bharati I	1623-1663
26. Sri Narasimha Bharati VI	1663-1706
27. Sri Sacchidananda Bharati II	1706-1741
28. Sri Abhinava Sacchidananda Bharati I	1741-1767
29. Sri Narasimha Bharati VII	1767-1770
30. Sri Sacchidananda Bharati III	1770-1814
31. Sri Abhinava Sacchidananda Bharati II	1814-1817
32. Sri Narasimha Bharati VIII	1817-1879
33. Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati	1879-1912
34. Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati III	1912-1954
35. Sri Abhinava Vidya Tirtha	1954-1989
36. Sri Bharati Tirtha	1989-

Literary Works by Jagadgurus of Sri Sarada Pitha, Sringeri

Jagadguru	Ashrama Name	Major Works
2	Sri Suresvaracharya	<i>Naishkarmyasiddhi, Bhrihadaranyaka Bhashya Vartikam, Manasollasaha, Taittiriya Bhashya-Vartikam, Panchikarana-Vartikam</i>
4	Sri Jnanaghanacharya	<i>Tattvasuddhihi</i>
11	Sri Bharati Tirtha and	<i>Chaturveda Bhashyani, Panchadasi, Vaiyasika Nyayamala.</i>
12	Sri Vidyaranya	<i>Vivaranà-prameya-sangraha, Jivanamukti-viveka, Parasara Madhaviyam, Dhatu-vritti</i>
17	Sri Sankara Bharati	<i>Khacharadarpanam</i>
24	Sri Abhinava Narasimha Bharati.	<i>Shivagita Bhashyam</i>
25	Sri Sacchidananda Bharati	<i>Gurustutisatakam, Meenakshi-satakam, Kovidashtakam, Ramachandra-mahodaya-kavyam</i>
27	Sri Sacchidananda Bharati	<i>Mukambika Stotram, Sharada-stotram</i>
32	Sri Narasimha Bharati	<i>Venkatesa Karavalamba stotram</i>
33	Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati	<i>Bhakti-sudha-tarangini (Stotrani), Purusharthanirnaya, Anāditvapariśhkaraha</i>
34	Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati	<i>Vivekachudamani-vyakhyanam, Stotrani</i>
36	Sri Bharati Tirtha	<i>Stotrani</i>

॥ अभिनवविद्यातीर्थ अक्षरमाला स्तोत्रम् ॥

Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Aksharamala Stotram

H. H. SRI BHARATI TIRTHA MAHASWAMIGAL

A poem composed by Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha, the present Acharya of Sringeri Sarada Pitham, on his guru H. H. Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha.

अखिलानन्दसंधायि मनोज्ञमुखपङ्कजम् ।
जगद्गुरुं जगत्पूज्यं विद्यातीर्थमाश्रये ॥१॥

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिः दृष्टे यस्मिन्निति श्रुतिः ।
जगौ परावरं शान्तं तं विद्यातीर्थमाश्रये ॥२॥

नटते मुखरञ्जे हि यस्य साक्षात् सरस्वती ।
नतार्तिशमने दक्षं तं विद्यातीर्थमाश्रये ॥३॥

वटमूलं परित्यज्य शृङ्गाद्रौ निवसन् हि यः ।
तत्त्वं बोधयते भक्तान् दक्षिणास्यं तमाश्रये ॥४॥

विषयाशां परित्यज्य वैराग्यं परमं श्रिताः ।
मुनयो यत्कृपाभाजः तं विद्यातीर्थमाश्रये ॥५॥

द्यावाभूमी हि जनयन् देव एक इति श्रुतिः ।
यं वर्णयति सर्वेशं तं विद्यातीर्थमाश्रये ॥६॥

तीरे तुङ्गातटिन्या यः शिष्यान् सम्यक् प्रबोधयन् ।
आस्ते देशिकराजं तं विद्यातीर्थमाश्रये ॥७॥

र्थं अपूर्वं श्रुतेर्यस्तु यथावदवबोधयन् ।
शिष्यान् धर्मपथासक्तान् कुरुते तमहं श्रये ॥८॥

अनुबन्ध - IV

॥ श्री चन्द्रमौलीश्वरवर्णमालास्तुतिः ॥

श्री जगद्गुरु श्री श्री भारती तीर्थ जी महाराज

श्रीशात्मभूमुख्यसूरार्चितांघ्रिं श्रीकण्ठशर्वादि पदाभिधेयम्।

श्रीशंकराचार्यहृदब्जवासं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि॥

चण्डांशु शीतांशु कृशानुनेत्रं चण्डीशमुख्यप्रमथेडचपादम्।

षडास्यं नागास्य सुशोभिपार्श्वं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि॥

द्रव्यादिसृष्टिस्थितिनाशहेतुं रव्यादितेजांस्यपि भासयन्तम्।

पव्यायुधादि स्तुतवैभवं तं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि॥

मौलिस्फुरज्जन्हुसुतासितांशुं व्यालेशसंवेष्टितपाणिपादम्।

शूलादिनानायुधशोभमानं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि॥

लीलाविनिर्धूतकृतान्तदर्पं शैलात्मजासंश्रितवामभागम्।

शूलाग्रनिर्भिन्नसुरारिसंघं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि॥

शतैःश्रुतीनां परिगीयमानं यतैर्मुनीन्द्रैः परिसेव्यमानम्।

नतैःसुरेन्द्रैरभिपूज्यमानं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि॥

मत्तेभकृत्त्या परिशोभिताङ्गं चित्ते यतीनां सततं वसन्तम्।

चित्तेशमुख्यैः परिवेष्टितं तं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि॥

हंसोत्तमैः चेतसि चिन्त्यमानं संसारपाथोनिधिकर्णधारम्।

तं सामगानप्रियमष्टमूर्तिं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि॥

नताघहं नित्यचिदेकरूपं सतां गतिं सत्यसुखस्वरूपम्।

हतान्धकं हृद्यपराक्रमं तं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि॥

मायातिगं वीतभयं विनिद्रं मोहापहं मृत्युहरं महेशम्।

फालानलं नीलगलं कृपालुं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि॥

मित्रं हि यस्याखिलशेवधीशःपुत्रश्च विघ्नौघविभेददक्षः।

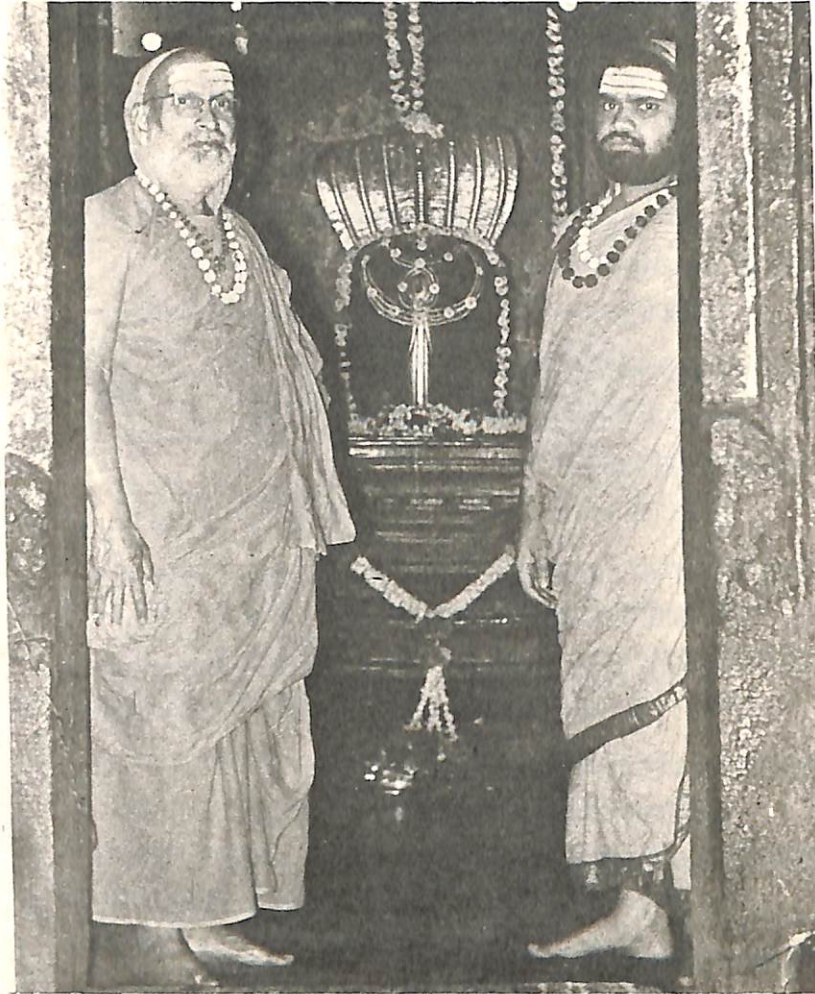
पात्रं कृपायाश्च समस्तलोकः श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि॥

॥ शारदापञ्चरत्नस्तुतिः ॥

(श्री जगद्गुरु श्री श्री भारती तीर्थ जी महाराज)

- श्रीमच्छङ्करदेशिकेन्द्रचित्ते तुङ्गापगातीरगे
 शृङ्गेर्याख्यपुरस्थिते सुविमले सन्मौनि संसेविते ।
 पीठे तां रविकोटिदीप्तिसहितां राराजमानां शिवाम्
 राजीवाक्षमुखामरार्चितपदां वन्दे सदा शारदाम् ॥ १
- पादानम्रजनार्तिनाशनिपुणां नादानुसन्धायिनीम्
 वेदान्तप्रतिपाद्यमानविभवां वादादिशक्तिप्रदाम् ।
 विद्याकल्पलतां चतुर्मुखाम्भोजातसूर्यायितां
 विद्यातीर्थगुरुत्तमैरहरहः संसेव्यमानां भजे ॥ २
- ईषत्स्मेरमुखाम्बुजां कुचभरानम्रां त्रिलोकावनीम्
 दैत्यव्रातविनाशिनीं कचजितप्रावृट्पयोदां शिवाम् ।
 संसारार्णवमग्रदीनजनतासन्तापसन्नाशिनीम्
 वन्दे तां शुभदामनन्यशरणः स्वान्ते सदा शारदाम् ॥ ३
- कारुण्यामृतवारिराशिमनिशं केयूरहारैर्वृताम्
 कामारेस्सहजां कराब्जविलसत्कीरां कुबेरार्चिताम् ।
 कामक्रोधमुखारिवर्गशमनीं कैवल्यसम्पत्प्रदाम्
 कञ्जोद्भूतमनः प्रियां हृदि भजे भक्त्या सदा शारदाम् ॥ ४
- नित्यानित्यविवेकदाननिपुणां स्तुत्यां मुकुन्दादिभिः
 यत्याकारशशाङ्कमौलिविनुतां सत्यापितस्वाश्रवाम् ।
 नत्या केवलमेव तुष्टहृदयां त्यक्त्वान्यदेवानहं
 भक्त्या मे हृदयाम्बुजेऽनवरतं वन्दे सदा शारदाम् ॥ ५

THE GREATNESS OF SRINGERI



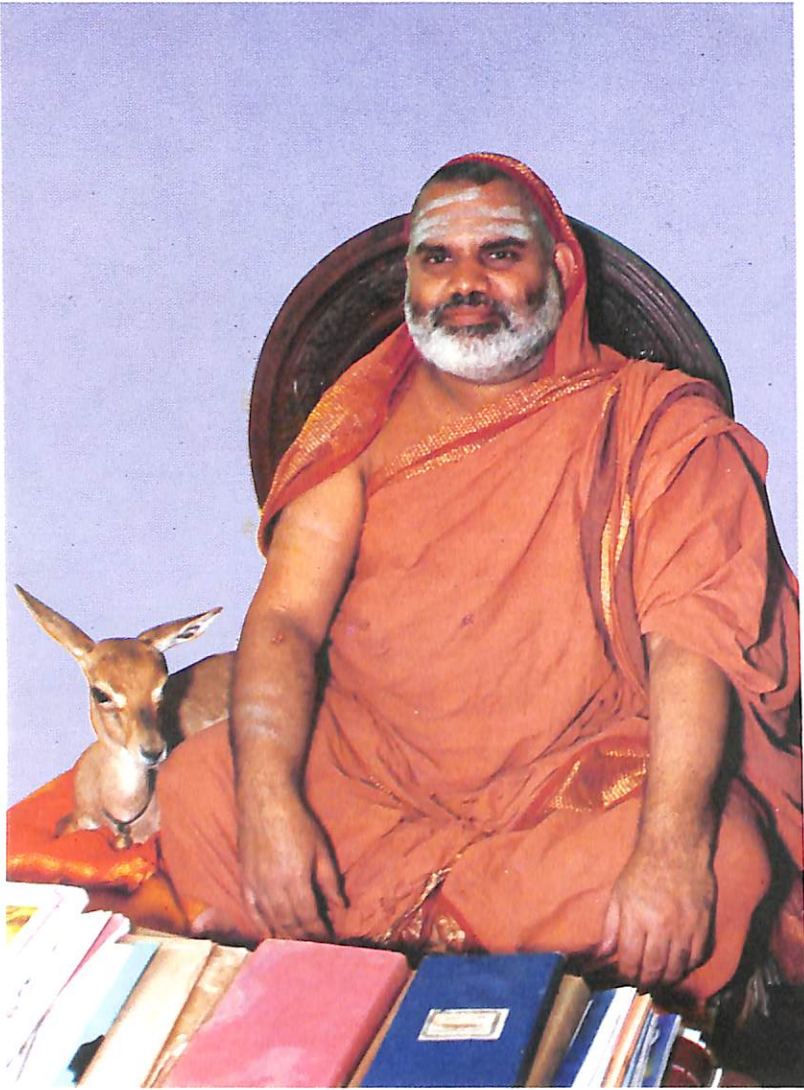
ॐ नमो ब्रह्मादिभ्यो ब्रह्मविद्यासम्प्रदायकर्तृभ्यो वंशऋषिभ्यो नमो गुरुभ्यः ॥

“Om, Salutations to those beginning with Lord Brahmā, who established the practice of Brahma Vidya and the rishis (sages) who kept the tradition.”

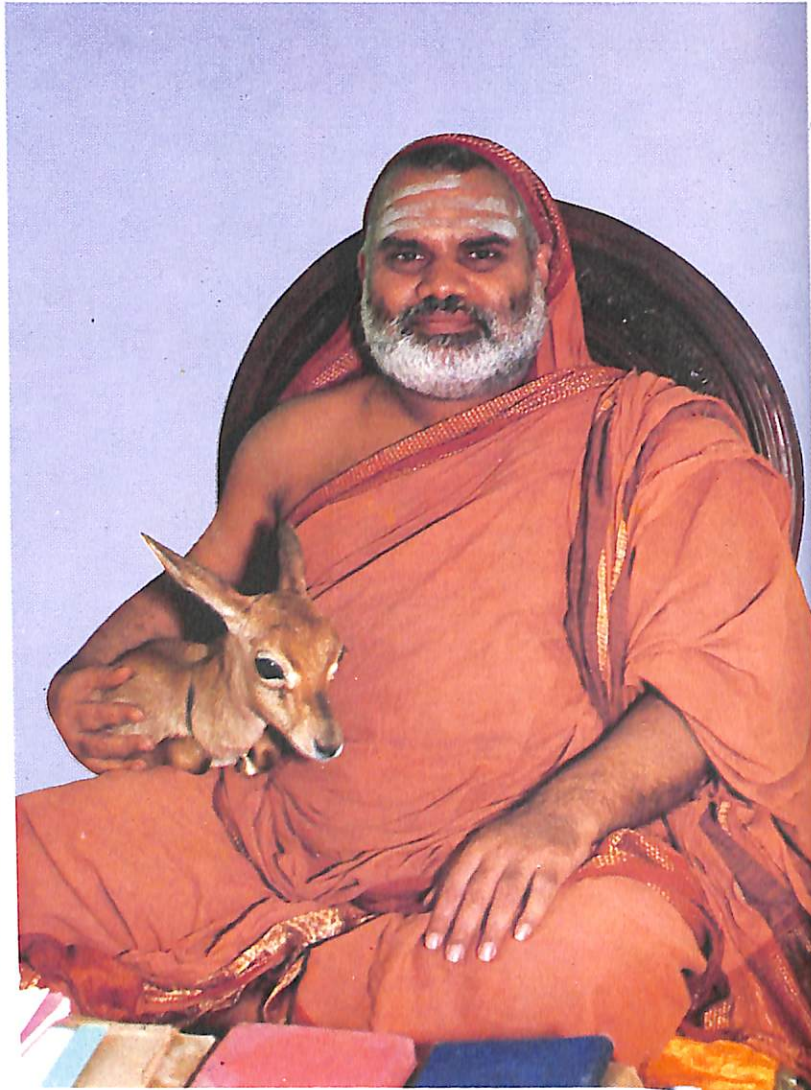
From Brhadāranyakopanishad Sri Sankarācharya Commentary (Introduction)



HIS HOLINESS JAGADGURU SHANKARACHARYA "SRI SRI BHARATHI THEERTHA MAHASWAMIJI"
OBSERVING "CHATHUR MASYA VRATHA" AT SRINGERI



Swamiji with Deer - [RAVI]



Swamiji with Deer - [RAVI]



"VIDYA THEERTHA SETHU"

The Walkway Bridge across the river TUNGA connecting the Mutt and Sri Narasimha Vana



DEER PARK



DEER PARK



Sri Sadvidya Sanjeevini Sanskrit Maha Patashala - Sringeri



Sri Sadvidya Sanjeevini Sanskrit Maha Patashala - Sringeri



"YATRI NIVAS" under Construction at Sringeri



"SRI SARADA KRUPA" - Guest House - Sringeri



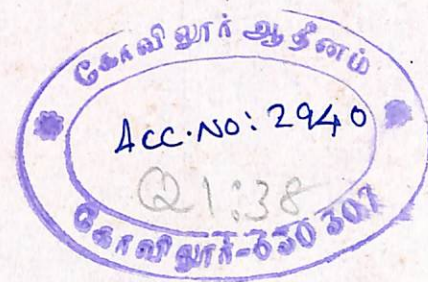
**Sri Sarada Danvantri Hospital - Sringeri
Out Patient Block**



Interior view of Out Patient Department



Sri Sadvidya Sanjivini Sanskrit Maha Patashala - Sringeri





A panoramic view of Narasimha Vana, the abode of Acharyas at Sringeri.